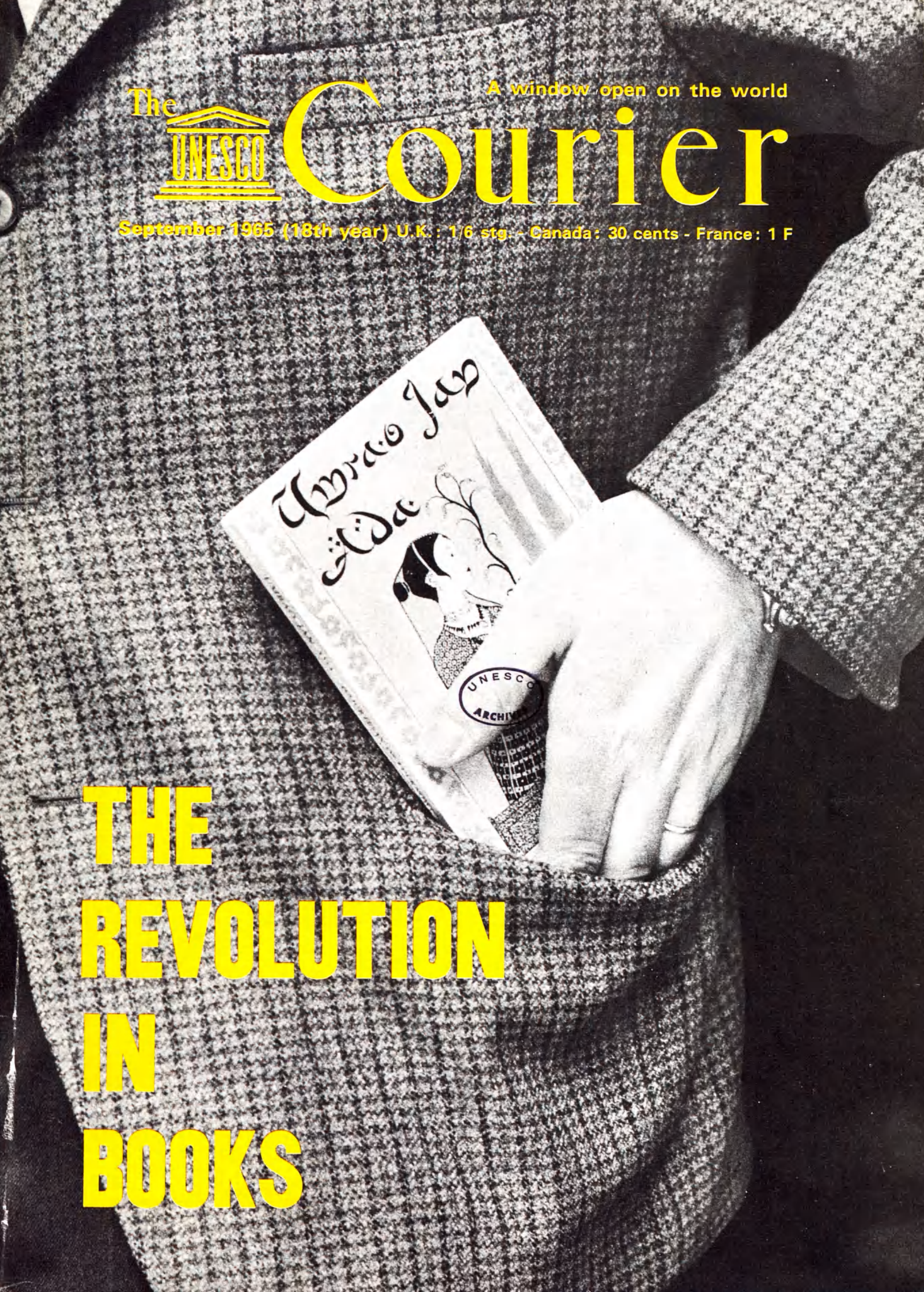
A window open on the world

The UNESCO Courier

September 1965 (18th year) U.K.: 1/6 stg. - Canada: 30 cents - France: 1 F



THE REVOLUTION IN BOOKS

HANDY FOR THE READER

In its search for mass-readership, the paperback has spread far from the bookstore. Today it is sold just about everywhere, from chain stores to the village grocer's shop, from the street-corner stall to the petrol station. Paperbacks on this self-service stand in a Paris store are displayed between electrical goods and paintbrushes.

The UNESCO Courier
A WINDOW OPEN ON THE WORLD

SEPTEMBER 1965 - 18TH YEAR

PUBLISHED IN NINE EDITIONS

English
French
Spanish
Russian
German
Arabic
U.S.A.
Japanese
Italian

Published monthly by UNESCO,

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Sales & Distribution Offices
Unesco, Place de Fontenoy, Paris-7e.

Annual subscription rates : 15/-stg. ; $3.00 (Canada) ; 10 French Francs or equivalent ; 2 years : 27/-stg. ; 18 F. Single copies 1/6-stg. ; 30 cents ; 1 F.

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THE UNESCO COURIER is published monthly, except in July and August when it is bi-monthly (11 issues a year) in English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic, Japanese and Italian. In the United Kingdom it is distributed by H.M. Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London, S. E. I.

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The Unesco Courier is indexed monthly in The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature published by H. W. Wilson Co., New York.

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N° 9 - 1965 MC.65-1-205 A

1965 INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION YEAR

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Cover photo

This issue is devoted to the revolution in books which has been sweeping both the developed and the developing countries with increasing momentum in recent years. Cover shows an Indian paperback of a classic entitled "Umrao Jan Ada", originally written in Urdu and translated into English in the Unesco series of Representative Works.

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THE REVOLUTION IN BOOKS

by Robert Escarpit

The tremendous changes in the world of books over the past few decades have now attained the proportions of a revolution. As Professor Robert Escarpit, the French author and critic, has pointed out: "During the past 2,000 years the book has gone through a series of mutations, all of them associated with its fundamental purpose of communicating ideas. Today we are experiencing the latest of these mutations, a mutation which is adapting books to the needs of mass readership." Professor Escarpit was speaking at a press conference held on June 10 to mark the publication by Unesco, of his study, "The Revolution in Books." In the following article, especially written for this issue devoted to books, Professor Escarpit reviews some of the outstanding questions he deals with in "The Revolution in Books." We also present salient passages from this important work on pages 11 to 15.

THE appearance of the mass-circulation book is probably the most important cultural development in the second half of the twentieth century. Although people everywhere have at last begun to show an interest in this event, no one has yet clearly grasped its significance nor fully realized that it is taking place. English-speaking countries, for instance, often misname this type of book "the paperback," although some paperbound books are high-priced articles with a very low circulation. Elsewhere, as in most European countries, it is called, even less appropriately, "the pocket book" or, quite absurdly, "the pocket-size book." It would be as reasonable to talk of "cheap books" or "bulk-printed books."

Mass-circulation books are not distinguished by their specific appearance nor by the number of copies printed nor by the retail price. It is easy to find examples of all these characteristics, sometimes more than a century back, whereas the mass-circulation book is a global phenomenon whose constituent elements cannot be separated, a new type of publishing venture which first took shape in 1935 with the appearance of the Penguin series in England.

The obvious features of mass-circulation books (sometimes wrongly regarded as fundamental characteristics) all combine to enable them to play their role, a role which consists of changing the scale on which publications are distributed, by providing new processes which open up still unsatisfied areas of readership, ethnic groups or social strata.

What is involved is not the adaptation of books to new conditions, but a genuine mutation. The mass-circulation book is as different from the classical book as was the printed book from the manuscript and the manuscript from the clay tablet. This mutation, in fact, will eventually change the content of books, just as it is already transforming the dialogue between author and reader which constitutes the reality of literature.

CONT'D ON PAGE 6

© Paul Almasy, Paris

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. Once a year, Spain's National Book Fair draws crowds of buyers to the open-air bookstalls set up, like this one in a Barcelona street, in all parts of the country. In recent years Spain's publishing industry has made spectacular progress: in 1964 it published 10,129 titles, an increase of 1,435 over 1963. Spain is now one of the twelve countries which together produce three-quarters of all the books published in the world.

A million copies quite normal

In other words, the whole of written culture as we have known it for two or three centuries past is directly challenged by mass-circulation books, and the cultivated classes of our time are only wrong in feeling disturbed over this development to the extent that such perturbation reflects a niggardly attachment to values which have become inadequate for the new dimensions of mankind.

To begin with, viewed as manufactured items, books have at one bound caught up with other products of modern industry; the book has been simultaneously adapted to the demands of mass production and modern design. There was virtually no technical difference between Gutenberg's books and books produced at the end of the eighteenth century; printers carried out identical operations and editions remained about the same size, rarely exceeding a few thousand copies.

Then, within ten to fifteen years, or roughly the length of the Napoleonic era, everything changed. Printing was mechanized and the book which had editions of from between ten thousand and one hundred thousand copies made its appearance. Editions of this order were still being printed 130 years later between the two world wars, and they are still produced in the traditional sector of publishing.

At the same time, however, mass consumer demands, emerging from and affecting social advancement, penetrated the cultural field. By the 1870s, these demands, which exerted pressure on the whole complex of trade and industry, were also affecting the media serving the field of culture, and especially books.

As everyone knows, one of the first effects of mass production in all fields was a decline in the aesthetic and functional qualities of the product manufactured. Because of their dual nature as physical objects and vehicles for the communication of thought, books proved particularly vulnerable to such debasement. "Mass produced" reading matter became a by-product of the newspapers and hawkers' books that were the only mass media of the time. Such "poor man's books" often sacrificed either content or appearance, and mostly both. At the beginning of the century the working class reader in city or village could only escape from the most stultifying type of reading by his sheer determination to rise above the ugliness and unsuitability of the reading material normally available to him.

IT is not surprising, therefore, that such media of mass communication as the radio and the cinema, which from the outset had an aesthetic adapted to their function, should have proved irresistible rivals to books. Indeed when the 1930s came bringing restlessness and more demanding standards, it might well have been thought that books had lost the battle.

Such was far from being the case. Although no one realized it at the time, a genuine revolution occurred in the mid-1930's in the thinking of our industrial civilization. Raymond Loewy then wrote in the United States "The Locomotive, Its Aesthetics," which anticipated his famous book on industrial design, "Never Let Well Enough Alone." A new type of functional beauty entered everyday life. In Western Europe it was introduced by the "one-price".

stores, and in Moscow a similar function was fulfilled by the newly-opened underground railway. Though this beauty may not have been to everyone's taste, it nevertheless suddenly lit up and humanized the dismal atmosphere of a mass consumer world.

Industrial design, which thus became part of our accustomed pattern a little before the Second World War, has been defined as "a technique connected with the creation of products, and aimed at studying the products devised by a firm on the basis of such criteria as suitability for use, beauty, ease of manufacture and reduction of cost price."

Consciously or unconsciously, Allen Lane applied these four criteria to book production when he founded Penguin Books in England in 1935. Penguin books were the first in the world to unite all the specific features of mass-circulation books. Pleasant to look at and convenient in form, they enabled works of real quality to be distributed in huge quantities and at a very low price. It should be repeated that none of these various elements can be considered separately; each depends on the others and the whole secret of mass-circulation books lies in achieving the right balance.

For the modest price of sixpence, the Penguin series gave the public books that normally sold in a hardback edition for ten shillings and sixpence — more than twenty times as much. Such sensationally low prices are now a thing of the past, but one of the requirements of the mass-circulation book is still that it should be sold at rock-bottom price.

This price can be worked out very accurately. The price at which a book is sold to the public is dependent on the cost price of each volume in the original edition, and is established on the basis of a simple formula. Some of the

USIS photos

Everywhere books have their uses, from the kitchen (how to prepare an Italian dish) to this cab rank in Central Park, New York (how to kill time while waiting for a passenger). Every day over one million paperbacks are sold in the United States. In 1964 they totalled one third of all titles published.

costs of printing a book (type-setting, going to press, etc.) remain the same no matter how many copies are printed; others (such as paper and binding), are linked to each individual volume and thus increase with the size of the edition. In terms of cost price per volume these expenses are incompressible. Fixed costs, however, decrease proportionately as the size of the edition increases, since they are spread over a greater number of copies. The cost price per volume thus diminishes accordingly.

There comes a moment, however, when the fixed costs are spread over such a large number of copies that the effect on the cost price is insignificant, and the latter, along with the retail price then becomes stabilized at the lowest level. The publisher's first concern must be to determine this point, since only when it has been reached can he benefit completely from the effects of mass production.

HOW far the publisher should go beyond this point remains to be seen. For the purchaser it makes no difference at all whether a book is published in 50,000 copies or in one million since the rock-bottom price has already been reached. But the situation is altogether different from the publisher's viewpoint. On the one hand his financial investment is larger and the risk corresponding greater; on the other hand, despite the reasonableness and stability of the price, he cannot expect to distribute a mass production book by the same methods he uses for smaller editions.

This brings us to a third requirement of the mass-circulation book: new distribution outlets must be found. In the most developed civilizations cultural patterns are still more or less marked by the stamp of a civilization based on a cultural elite. The bookshop network in particular serves only a small fraction of the population—those social strata or classes which produce the "cultivated" individuals.

In a highly developed country where the reading population (those capable of choosing and using reading matter) represents 70 to 75% of the population, the real public (those who make regular use of all types of reading matter) represents at most 15 to 20 %, and the cultivated public (those for whom the bookshops cater) barely 2 to 3%.

It is out of the question for the moment to reach the whole of the reading population. But mass-circulation books must spread far beyond the cultivated public and penetrate the real public where they will have their most effective social impact. This is what has happened in the United States, where before World War II best sellers rarely sold 100,000 copies, while editions of more than a million copies are now commonplace.

BOOKS are not distributed solely through bookshops, but from an infinite number of sales points, including drug-stores, self-services stores and bookstalls, with the backing of extensive advertising. Certain countries, and especially the U.S.S.R., have developed direct distribution methods through offices, factories and the postal service. Finally, in the years ahead we will see an extension of book vending machines which will increase the bookshop's distribution power tenfold.

It is in this way that the boundaries of the "cultivated" public are crossed. It should be noted, however, that high sales figures do not necessarily mean that those boundaries have been crossed. Many publishers, especially in Europe, believe they are publishing mass-circulation books because they have adopted the form and style of such books and have increased their printing runs ten or twenty-fold. All they have done in many cases is to saturate the market offered by the cultivated public through the inducement of reduced prices.

The whole operation takes place within the old socio-cultural frontiers, and this is especially true of countries which have a large and active, though poorly-off, intelligentsia. There are countries where mass circulation starts with sales of from five to ten thousand copies and others where sales of between 50,000 and 100,000 still represent limited distribution within the cultivated sector.

In short, the entry of books into the mass market can affect them in other than material ways. Their content is affected and, along with it, the use which readers make of that content. The dialogue between author and reader which constitutes the basic literary reality is being profoundly altered in its nature and in its machinery alike.

The reading of the cultivated person is marked by an active and conscious attitude. He reacts to what he is reading by judgements, observations and reasoned conclusions, whether the work in question is "literary", in the true sense, or functional. All these reactions combine to form a "literary opinion" whose image returns to the author through various channels: conversations, contacts between publishers and booksellers, literary reviews and so on.

This feedback to the author is the specific and distinctive feature of literary reality. It implies, incidentally, an

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

The paperback invades the university

extremely delicate balance. If the feedback signal is too strong, in other words if the author is too conscious of his public, his work may deteriorate.

If there is no feedback the author can only choose between the sterile seclusion of the literary coteries and the no less sterile use of mechanical techniques for capturing and retaining the attention of the anonymous public like any demagogue.

In mass circulation as we know it today, however, there is no cultural feedback. The literary opinion of the "masses" has no personal contacts, bookselling networks or literary criticism through which to express or transmit itself and often has not even the opportunity to take conscious form.

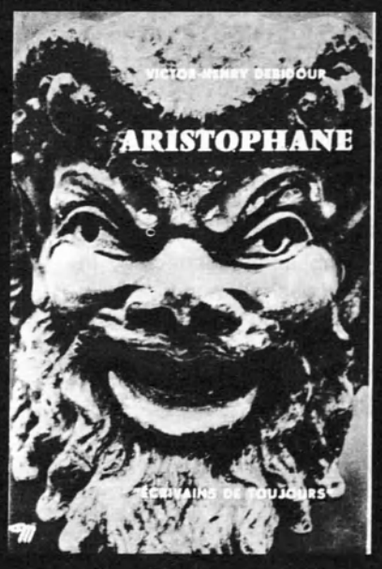
The publisher of mass-circulation books in thus confronted with a difficult problem. On the one hand, in view of the substantial capital involved, he must reduce the risks of the operation by programming his production to the maximum; on the other, he must offset the disadvantages of having no feedback to guide him. The problem varies according to the types of books he publishes. Here we need only consider three types of books.

First of all, there are the functional books which represent a known and recognized need. This to some extent guarantees the sale of a considerable number of copies. The typical example is the cookbook which continues to rank among the best selling paperbacks in the United States. Eating is a function which can always be relied on and love of good food is one of the commonest of all impulses.

The same applies to books needed by school and university students. In recent years the paperback has invaded the American universities. This has revolutionized research and teaching methods. Scientific textbooks, for example, are no longer rare and expensive works to be placed on library shelves where set timetables restrict their usefulness and where they slowly grow out of date.

They are now cheap, attractively but unpretentiously produced books which can be purchased for a modest sum and which students are therefore ready to purchase. Even if a student does not buy a book himself, the library can offer him several copies without worrying unduly over the possibility of their wearing out or being lost.

It is always possible, to reprint, bringing the book



France

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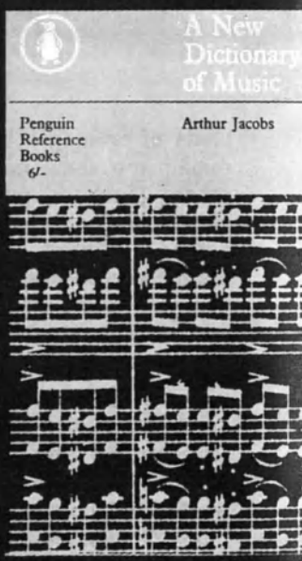
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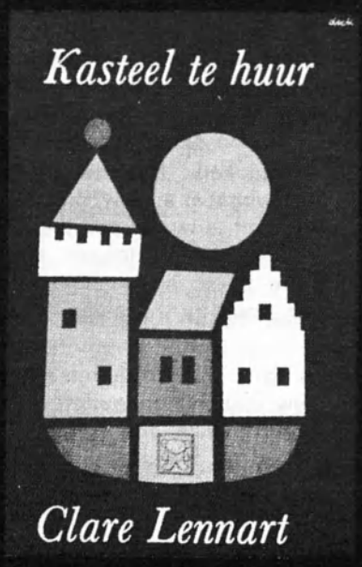

Netherlands

up to date at the same time. In this way it benefits from a genuine scientific feedback that expresses the views of its users. In France this system has been employed for many years in the *Que Sais-Je?* (What Do I Know?) series. In their special field of scientific popularization and explanation, these little books had already discovered the formula of the mass-circulation book in pre-war days, although they were probably unaware of it at the time.

Another formula adopted in mass-circulation publishing is to reprint a literary work which has already proved itself in the cultivated sector. It may be one of the classics or a book that has been outstandingly successful in an ordinary edition. The formula of the classic is obviously more convenient since the number of titles of works retained in a country's historical consciousness is strictly limited..roughly about one per cent. Reprinting the classics, therefore, presents few hazards and this explains why in most countries paperbacks have produced an unhoped for and reassuring flood of reprints of all kinds. Texts which have disappeared from circulation now enter the public domain and can be purchased at any bookstall.

At the same time, there is a limit to this wealth of material

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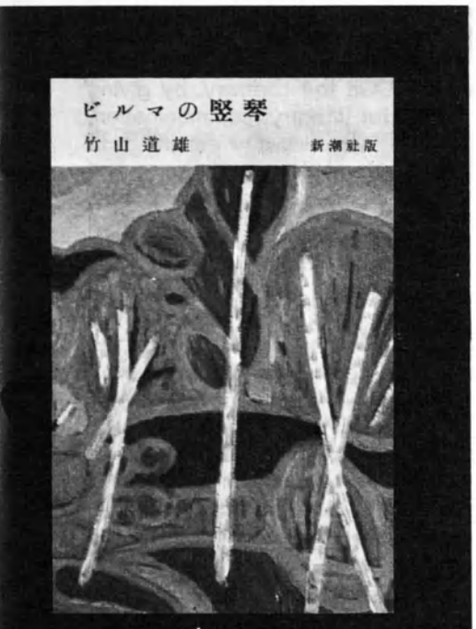
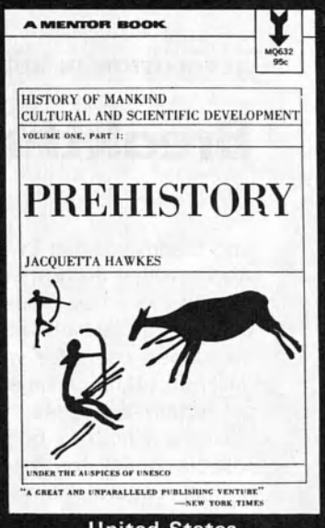


Japan

Federal Republic of Germany

The extraordinary development of the paperback has served to open still wider the field of research already well explored by graphic artists in producing illustrated book covers. The appearance of paperbacks, between one country and another, obviously reflects national tastes in illustration and typography, but their common denominator is perfect legibility combined with an unconventionality that touches the imagination of the reader. All covers, black and white and colour alike, use modern graphic forms of publicity and imagery.

Netherlands



United States

France

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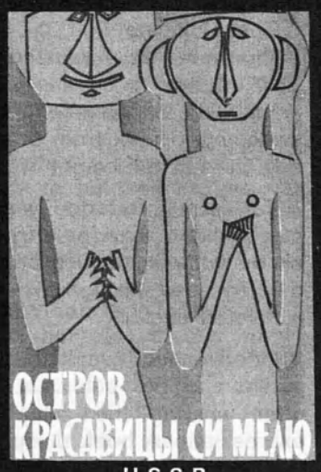
Poland



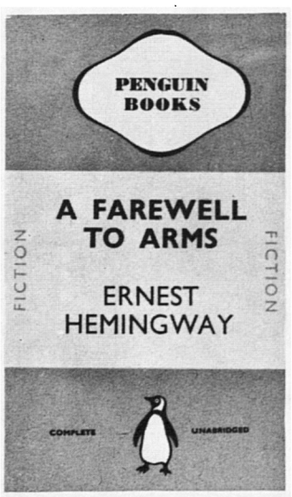
U.S.S.R.

Breakthrough to a vast public

and disadvantages in this practice. The number of classic works which a literature can offer is not infinite, amounting perhaps to a few thousand, and one can reasonably foresee a point at which mass-circulation books in the more developed countries will be offering scores of thousands of different titles. A time must come then, which is not far off in certain countries, when saturation of the market will cause a slump in books of this type, and when the only reliable outlet for these huge editions will consist of the normal cultural consumption of schools, universities and similar institutions.

But it is also possible to take up a best seller while it is still enjoying a success, before it becomes a classic and when the only process of selection it has undergone—one far less stringent than that of historical selection—is the test of normal sales through bookshops.

This may be a very profitable practice, but unfortunately many publishers have not yet understood the machinery of this kind of sale. They wait too long after the book's success in an ordinary edition before prolonging that success in a mass-circulation edition.



On July 30, 1935 bookshops and bookstalls in Great Britain first displayed ten new, paperbacked books in bold orange, blue and green covers decorated with a black and white penguin. They included novels, thrillers, and biographies, of a standard not often found at that time among books sold for sixpence. Among the authors of these first ten Penguin Books were Ernest Hemingway (cover left), André Maurois, Compton Mackenzie and Agatha Christie. Penguins broke new ground in publishing and triggered off developments which have touched nearly every book-producing country.

They imagine that the book's success in an ordinary edition must be exhausted before launching it among what they believe to be an extension of the same public. In actual fact experience proves that the ideal moment for switching a book from the ordinary to the mass-circulation edition is at the height of its success in the former edition.

Far from interfering with its success in that form, the mass edition provides a fresh impetus, exerting an influence on the ordinary edition at the same time as it builds up its own success through the interest the book arouses in the cultivated sector.

In advanced twentieth century societies, the cultivated public and the public at large come into contact daily, often sharing the same media of communication and expression. A book discussed in the literary columns of a newspaper is not overlooked by readers of the paper who are primarily interested in the sports pages or the crime reports.

The solitary disadvantage of the system, therefore, is not an economic one. It lies in the fact that the switching of a book from the ordinary to the mass-circulation edition is a unilateral operation. The book in question has been lifted up and stimulated by a cultivated literary opinion. Now it is imposed on the mass readership which unfortunately has no feedback circuit through which to bring its opinion to bear on subsequent productions.

THIS brings us to the third type of mass circulation book—the one produced directly for the mass market and under pressure from that public. These are, broadly speaking, the new literary books in the usual sense of the expression. Unhappily, experience demonstrates that such books are extremely rare. Publishers have not yet clearly understood the nature of the instrument they possess. Still less do they know how to use it. They are handicapped by obstacles of an institutional kind, unsatisfactory distribution channels, the indifference or hostility of critics, representing the opposition of the cultivated sector to the mass-circulation book.

Even so, and this should be emphasized, the mass-circulation book will never destroy books in ordinary editions or even the semi-de luxe book. On the contrary, by giving unlimited scope to the bases for literary communication, by transforming reading into a true, everyday activity, and one which is an integral part of man's existence, it will awaken a new interest in and a new enthusiasm for books.

Those who fear that the semi-de luxe book and the handsome, top-quality book are doomed to be ousted by the mass-circulation book are mistaken. The desire to own books published in beautifully finished editions, solid and lasting, pleasant to contemplate and to touch, represents on the part of the reader, a final choice which can only be the outcome of a long experience of reading. If so many imitation de-luxe editions are now being distributed by various clubs and if books are often regarded as decorative elements or status symbols, this is because in such cases the possession of a book is unrelated to the act of reading, because there is a breach between the book and its purpose.

As living standards rise throughout the world, the quality book becomes accessible to more and more deeper and deeper strata of the population; but reading, in the sense of conscious reading, what we call literary reading, remains the prerogative of a minority. Thanks to the mass-circulation book, this situation is changing and we may fairly hope that in the course of the next fifty years this type of book, the "reading machine", will make its full contribution to the life of the new societies which will inherit our world.

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USIS

TASS

In a supermarket (left) a housewife interrupts grocery shopping to buy books. Right, mobile shop brings new books to factory workers. Forerunner of press, radio, films and television, the book has now taken its place alongside these media of mass communication.

WANTED: A NEW DIALOGUE BETWEEN AUTHORS & READERS

The impact of the mass circulation book is not merely one of quantity. What we are witnessing today is a complete transformation in ideas about books and about the relationship between the author and his new public. The problem of opening a "dialogue" between author and reader is examined by Robert Escarpit in, "La Révolution du Livre" (The Revolution in Books) from which the following text is adapted. Professor Escarpit's book will appear in English later this year.

THE writer has not yet found his place in the contemporary community. The reason for this is perhaps that the modern community is an enormous mutual security structure designed to protect its members from the hazards of nature in the raw and man's estate.

But there is no way of protecting writers as such. True, they can be given the same social security as all other citizens, old-age pensions, free medical care, and legal aid, but they cannot be insured against their literary hazards.

We are now sufficiently well acquainted with the mechanics of literary life to appreciate that the writer proposes and the public disposes—and so it must be. Literature is born out of this intercommunication, derives its sustenance therefrom and develops because of it. But it is a murderous system in the sense that, for every thousand works conceived, ten come to birth and one to maturity.

The proportion can, of course, be improved by various technical devices, notably by broadening the social bases of intercommunication, by improving distribution channels, by giving the reader better and more frequent opportunities of expressing his considered judgement, but the hazards cannot be eliminated nor even reduced to any significant extent.

. . . A writer's success is not quite the same as a publisher's. It is not enough for a book to sell well and provide a certain return. How indeed could we calculate the interest on an investment reckoned in terms of life, thought and action? Whatever his financial gains, the writer never recovers his capital; he works without security. We can, none the less, accept an economic definition of a writer's success: it is the point at which the sales of one of his books enable him to live by his writing. This point, moreover, represents another aspect of success—the point at which a writer saturates his possible public.

There is too much talk nowadays of how reading should be "guided" and readers "directed." These are dangerous terms which, in any case, have nothing to do with the true role of criticism, which is to bear witness rather than to teach.

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The snares of success

Nowadays, the critic can speak to the general public on behalf of literature and can reach that public. He need do no more than become an adapter or commentator. A sensitive and straightforward analysis of a text is tremendously effective on the television screen. The interpretation of a literary masterpiece on television or radio may perhaps be a misconstruction of the work, but it is certainly of the type of those that have been called creative misconstructions. Film producers have always encouraged people to see the film after reading the book. To read the book after seeing the film is no less to be recommended and in all probability more fruitful.

Any literary criticism suited to mass circulation literature should be based on a knowledge of the literary behaviour of the public at large, acquired from inside, and personal experience of it. In the extreme case, it may even be considered that the critic is not absolutely needed as an intermediary. In the socialist countries, contacts between writers and workers in various sectors are systematically organized, being based on living as a community and working as a team.

These methods are undoubtedly effective but it is difficult to do without an organizer to establish a common language and prevent misunderstandings. Here, perhaps, is the new figure needed in our present age—the cultural leader who does not restrict himself to the facile resources of image and sound but uses them in order to undertake, with all the intellectual humility and team spirit required, the difficult task of organizing communication between the people at large and the individual.

The success of mass-circulation literature depends on the existence of such exchanges. The meeting ground will necessarily be non-literary precisely because the exchanges must go beyond the limits of the cultivated public. Even if a writer and a reader are physically and intellectually very distant from one another, the sharing of trade union, political, religious or even just sports activities may make it possible to create the conditions required for communication between them.

It is here that the literary prize, so often and unfairly denounced, may take on a fresh significance. Such attempts at making a responsible selection from a necessarily anarchic output are useful and even vital in themselves. They essentially imply an academy, for through them a representative selection of cultivated people belonging to a certain social group clearly and firmly express the preferences of that group.

Illustration from "Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts," a U.S. book recording T.V. programmes on music for young people. (Simon and Shuster, New York.)

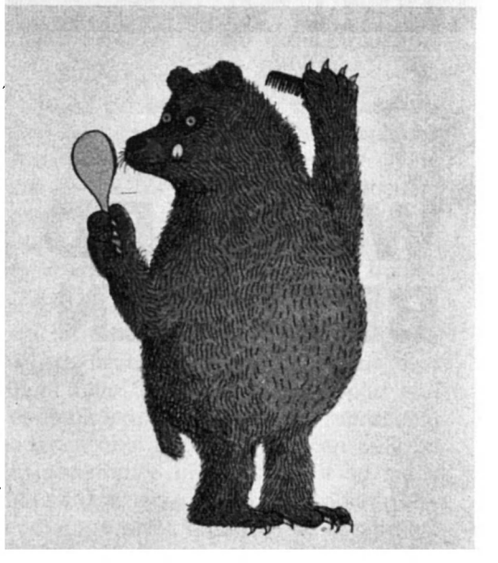

Illustration from "If Apples Had Teeth," an amusing collection of illustrated "ifs" by Milton and Shirley Glaser, published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

In various forms, the system operated very satisfactorily for centuries, in fact so long as the cultivated group remained relatively small and homogeneous. The difficulties began in the nineteenth century, and have steadily increased up to the present, as new social groups took their place in forming literary opinion, set up their own academic standards and developed their own judgements. One of the results of this increase in the number of academies, whether avowedly such or not, is the present plethora of literary prizes which deprives the selection of all its value.

But there is something still more serious to be considered. In an élite culture, values remain stable whereas, in a mass culture, they are fluid and constantly called in question since what is involved is a way of life rather than a way of being. The academic accolade of the literary prize is, in the literal sense of the word, a consecration. It marks out the author as one entitled to the enduring respect of his peers for certain merit which can never again be depreciated, but it also places him irremediably

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS CONGRESS

Four subjects of special interest to Unesco—obstacles to the free flow of books, international copyright, educational publishing and books for developing countries—were among the topics discussed by the 17th Triennial Congress of the International Publishers Association, which was held in Washington D.C. (U.S.A.) from May 30 to June 5. The theme of the Congress was "The World and the Book : Publishing in an Age of Change."

In a message to the Congress, the Director-General of Unesco, M. René Maheu, reminded delegates that the historic role of books as a vehicle for the communication of ideas has been revolutionized by social and technological change. "The acute shortage of books which exists in the vast and populous developing regions of the world is a matter of common concern," said Mr. Maheu. "This poverty of reading material ... constitutes a formidable barrier to education and to social and economic advancement generally. The General Conference of Unesco, at its last session, called for a coordinated programme designed to increase the availability of books in the developing countries ... I believe that the International Publishers Association and Unesco are uniquely equipped, in partnership, to provide the impetus for this great enterprise."

out of reach of the people as a whole by transforming him into a celebrity.

This phenomenon of celebrity, very clearly recognized by Carlyle as early as 1840, dates from the earliest large-scale printings at the beginning of the nineteenth century, one of the most spectacular examples at that time was the Byron cult. By no means all the winners of the Prix Goncourt or the Nobel Prizes in our own day receive the hero worship from which Byron suffered and which was almost comparable with that now extended towards film stars, but the mere prestige of their award turns them, as it were, into institutions, legends, totems or, at best, shining examples. This is one of the swiftest forms of that literary death which accompanies success and, unless he has an exceptional determination to recreate himself and maintain his independence, no writer can hope to escape it.

With or without mass-circulation books, societies possessing a long-established literary tradition will find it difficult to preserve themselves from the academic reaction and will long continue to treat their writers as intellectual heroes, but the younger nations where literature is currently emerging must beware of the snare of institutionalization.

If they set up literary prizes—and they would be wrong to disdain this method of selecting and encouraging writers —they will have to ensure that these reflect broad currents of opinion deriving from the inmost feelings of the people, even perhaps before the intellect comes into play at all.

With all due respect, it may be asked whether those mysterious groundswells which lift up to the heights of glory this or that singer or musician, or even this or that poet who has chosen the record as his medium, may not be more effective and more authentic than the pondered judgements of the experts. The ideal would be for the two forms of evaluation to be in agreement but this is still, for the time being, a vain hope.

We must, after all, face up to the facts. The present mutation in the world of books may prove successful but will be neither complete nor final. We may talk of mass circulation but by no means all the "masses" are involved. Even in the most advanced countries, only a fraction of those able to read will take to reading during the present stage —that fraction which succeeds in gaining control of the social structures required for that end.

In the developing countries—and we must bear in mind that the reading public in Asia represents a quarter of the total population and in Africa one-eighth—many other stages and many other mutations will be needed before whatever is to replace books as they now are (perhaps at no very distant date) can ensure that the messages of information and culture circulate freely among all men.

But even then there will still be active and passive readers. There will always be people who, through idleness, timidity or inclination, will decline communication with the writer. There will always be those who love books as objects and will not dissociate the message of the binder and the printer from that of the writer.

This is of no great importance. The main thing is to ensure that active readers should be more and more num-

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THE FASCINATION OF STORY BOOKS. Children choose books from a mobile library serving a Budapest suburb. All over the world books for children and young people have multiplied enormously in the past twenty years, and many are now illustrated by leading artists. In the U.S.A. over 220,000 copies priced at less than $1.00 each were sold in 1964.

Unesco - A. Tessore

To vanquish hunger of the mind

erous and more and more receptive. There is no reason why plastic values should not be integrated with the values of action, intelligence and sensitivity, in fact with all those values which give reading its place in human life. The revolution in publishing is the most liberal of all revolutions.

All it asks is that there be neither prejudice nor inflexibility. Fetishism or fanaticism attached to books are incompatible with the generosity of books. Books are like bread. Throughout the world, the production of grain and the basic foodstuff derived from it was primitive man's great victory over hunger. The result was that bread became something almost holy, the symbol of liberating labour, survival and communion. The instinctive reactions of many peoples—especially the French—still embody this sort of innate respect for bread, which is obscurely enshrined in their collective memory as a saviour.

Books are the object of the same sort of unacknowledged veneration since they were the bread of the mind, the great victory achieved by somewhat less primitive men over ignorance and the slavery it means. A book which does not last, an ephemeral book, a book which is an act and not necessarily a lasting reality, a treasure to be preserved, a possession for all time, is something which profoundly shocks our instinctive feelings and may even disgust us.

AT the same time, we are very well aware that the poor man's bread in the present day world has ceased to be a symbol and has become a mere metaphor, and a bad one at that. We know that the world's hunger will not be overcome this time by the individual magic of the ear or the loaf, but by a vast collective effort bringing into play all the scientific, technical, and mechanical resources of the advanced civilizations, by a profound and systematic reform of social structures, by a concerted world policy which will affect many other sectors besides those of agriculture and food.

Nor can the great hunger of the mind be overcome in any other way. The individual demands of writers, the refined tastes of cultivated book lovers, should be given neither more nor less weight in our plans for the future than the majestic gesture of the sower or the gastronomy of Brillat-Savarin in the discussions of the Food and Agriculture Organization.

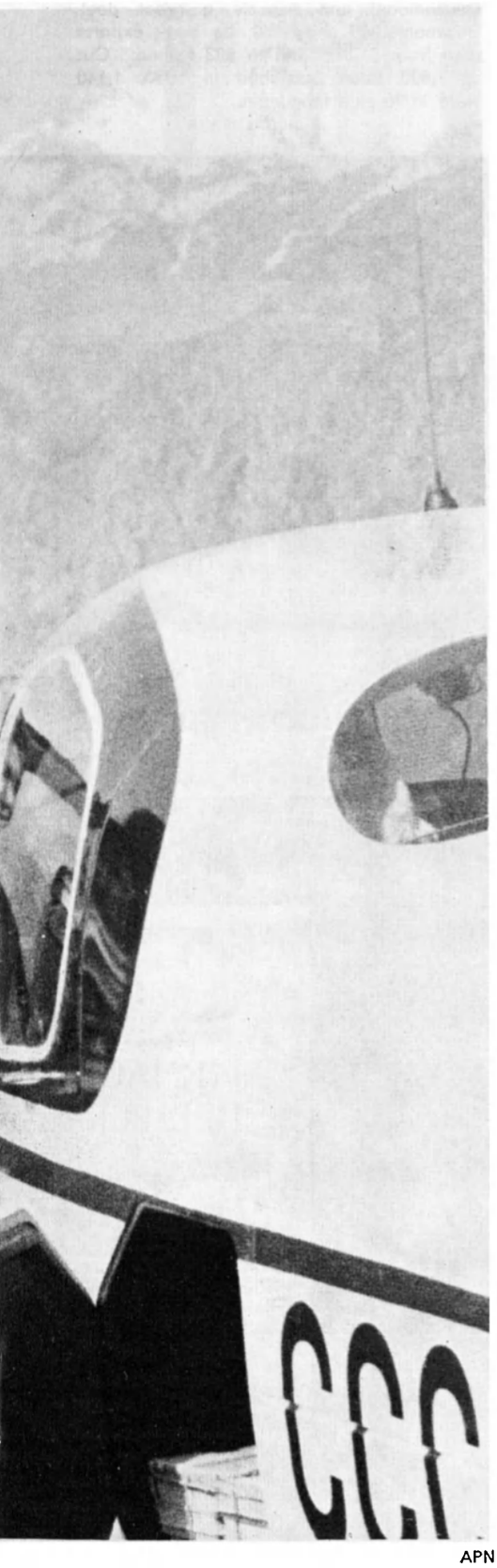
We must deny nothing, but nor must we interpose anything between books and life, and especially not myths. We are living in an age when great things are being done by teams assisted by machines. We readily accept this for the arts which have developed along with mass civilization, such as radio, television and films, not to mention the theatre, where there is direct contact with the audience and where the principle has always been more or less accepted. We must now go on to accept it in respect of books.

It goes without saying that the very nature of reading will always necessitate a greater measure of solitude than other forms of communication or artistic expression, but the solitude of the writer, like the solitude of the reader, is not anti-social. It is only the means whereby each may find the other. A man reading alone in his room often has more companions than if he were watching a film with a thousand other spectators in a cinema.

It is this inherent virtue of books which must be maintained and developed. Dissemination, limitless and ceaselessly renewed communication among all men—that is the true function of the book. Once it ceases to fulfil it, however fine its appearance and however noble its content, it is merely so much waste paper, a soulless treasure.

A "bibliocopter" lands a new stock of books for a library in an isolated village in the mountains of Soviet Turkestan, Central Asia. Today the U.S.S.R. has some 400,000 public libraries of all kinds, from the huge Lenin Library in Moscow down to local lending libraries in factories and farms.

TWO-THIRDS OF WORLD'S BOOKS PRODUCED BY TWELVE COUNTRIES



APN

A book—at least 49 pages

Until November 1964 there was no uniform international definition of what constitutes a book. The variety of criteria used in different countries for defining a book complicated the work of preparing and interpreting publishing statistics. In Italy, for example, a book was classed as having at least 100 pages; India had no stipulations on size. In November 1964, the General Conference of Unesco unanimously adopted a "Recommendation concerning the international standardization of statistics relating to book production and periodicals", which defines a book as "a non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages, exclusive of the cover pages". This recommendation classifies a pamphlet as "a non-periodical publication of at least five but not more than 48 pages, exclusive of the cover pages", and also defines a first edition, a re-edition, a reprint, a translation and a title.

Publisher's windfall

A single best-seller, published in several hundreds of thousands of copies and intelligently exploited, has often kept a publishing house going for several years, counterbalancing careless management, errors of judgement and commercial blunders serious enough to endanger the business.

Literature and languages

Twelve literary languages are each commonly used by more than 50 million people. In order of numerical importance they are: Chinese, English, Russian, Hindi, Spanish, German, Japanese, Bengali, Arabic, French, Portuguese and Italian. The English language area includes two great economic powers, U.S.A. and U.K., and also takes in the countries of the British Commonwealth. Like the English, the Spanish group is widely dispersed, but the nations comprising it are less economically developed. The French group also has branches extending overseas (Canada, Haiti, West Indies and Africa), but its numerical importance comes from France, Belgium and Switzerland.

World book production

Total annual world production of titles between 1960 and 1963 was as follows: 360,000; 375,000; 385,000 and 400,000. The English, French, German and Spanish share of this production totalled 34% in 1952 and about 36% in 1962. In the English-language area, the U.S.A. is now replacing the U.K. as the leading producer. The sudden rise in U.S. production is largely due to the mass publication of paperbacks. Paperback sales in the U.S. had already reached one million daily by 1960.

In 1962 production in the socialist countries (not including mainland China) almost exactly equalled the combined production of the English, French, German and Spanish linguistic areas. It totalled some 125,000 titles —36% of world production.

Giants of publishing

Six countries produce more than 20,000 titles a year. By volume of production they are: U.S.S.R., mainland China, Germany (figures for the Federal Republic alone or including those of Eastern Germany), Japan and U.S.A. Six other countries—France, India, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Czechoslovakia— each publish about 10,000 titles annually. Twelve countries alone produce two-thirds of the world's books. The 80,000 or so volumes published in the U.S.S.R. are not all books according to the 1964 Unesco definition. Many Soviet titles are actually counted several times, since the figure of 80,000 relates not only to books in the Russian language, but to volumes in 93 languages (61 used by the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and 32 foreign languages) Yet even if only the works published in Russian and distributed through normal commercial channels are counted, Soviet production is still the highest of any country in the world, with over 30,000 titles.

One man's book

India ranks as a leading book publisher because it counts even short pamphlets as books. It should actually be classed much lower in world publishing. If Italy had a less strict definition of books it would be on the same footing as France in terms of production, and the same is true of Czechoslovakia. No details are available on the classification of books in mainland China.

Growing need for paper

In 1950, the English speaking countries of America were consuming more than half of the world's supply of printing paper. By 1960 this consumption had dropped to 43.2%. During the same period Europe and Latin America remained at the same level while the Pacific region—basically

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Australia and New Zealand—showed a slight advance.

The most spectacular progress was made by the Afro-Asian countries: an increase of 242.5% for Africa and 512.3% for Asia. In Asia this advance was not limited to economically developed countries such as Japan and mainland China, but also extended over the whole of this vast area where such countries as Burma, Cambodia, Iraq and Israel increased their consumption of printing and writing paper tenfold. The outstanding case was Syria whose consumption per head rose from .01 kilogrammes per year in 1950 to 0.3 kilogrammes in 1960. The same development is taking place in Africa where paper consumption in the newly-independent countries rose from 6,000 tons in 1950 to 90,000 tons in 1960.

A rare book: the best-seller

Best-sellers are extremely rare and represent barely two to three per cent of successful books. The best-seller is determined not by the number of copies sold but by the type of sales pattern. A book may be a best-seller with a sale of 50,000 just as easily as with one of three million. Very few books have a long life. Out of a hundred published, scarcely ten sell a year later and ten times fewer twenty years later.

Translation test

Books are first tried out in a certain literary market, language area, ideological bloc or State. When a book fails this test, there is no longer any question of translating it even though, in other countries there may be an unsuspected public eager to welcome it.

Books and world trade

The book trade occupies a relatively minor place in international trade. The world's chief book exporters are U.K., Netherlands, U.S.A., France, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany. In none of these countries, however, do book exports account for as much as one per cent of global national exports. Yet the volume of trading in books is continually increasing. In terms of tonnage rather than price, book exports have doubled in most countries over the past ten years.

Costly transport

In "Trade Barriers to Knowledge", published in Paris in 1956, Unesco reviewed the diversity of laws existing in 92 countries. The Universal Postal Union has urged its member countries to systematically reduce postal rates for books and to simplify customs and administrative formalities generally. Great progress has been made in this direction since 1952 and some fifty states have acted on the Universal Postal Union recommendations. Since 1953 airline companies in the International Air Transport Association have applied the tariff for periodicals and catalogues to books.

But the transport of books is still costly. Even in countries where books are classed as printed matter, the cost of sending a volume of average size is 3 U.S. cents. This sum may seem trivial for a single, expensive book, but when bulk distribution is involved it affects the retail price considerably.

Major exporters

Nine-tenths of U.S.S.R. book exports are taken by the socialist countries. Just under half of U.S. exports go to other English-speaking countries, where they meet competition from Great Britain. Excluding books sent to other socialist countries, Soviet exports are as follows: Western Europe, 41%; English-speaking America, 21%; Far East, 16%; Latin America, 6%; Near East, 4%; Africa, 3%; miscellaneous, 7%. Excluding books sent to English-language areas, American book exports are as follows: Far East, 33%; Latin America, 27%; Europe, 25%; Near East, 8%; Africa, 4%; miscellaneous, 8%.

The importance of these enormous distribution channels increases yearly. One of their chief advantages is their suitability for distributing the functional type of book in the developing countries. In nearly every case technical reasons prevent the importer countries from producing these types of books at present.

Decade of changes

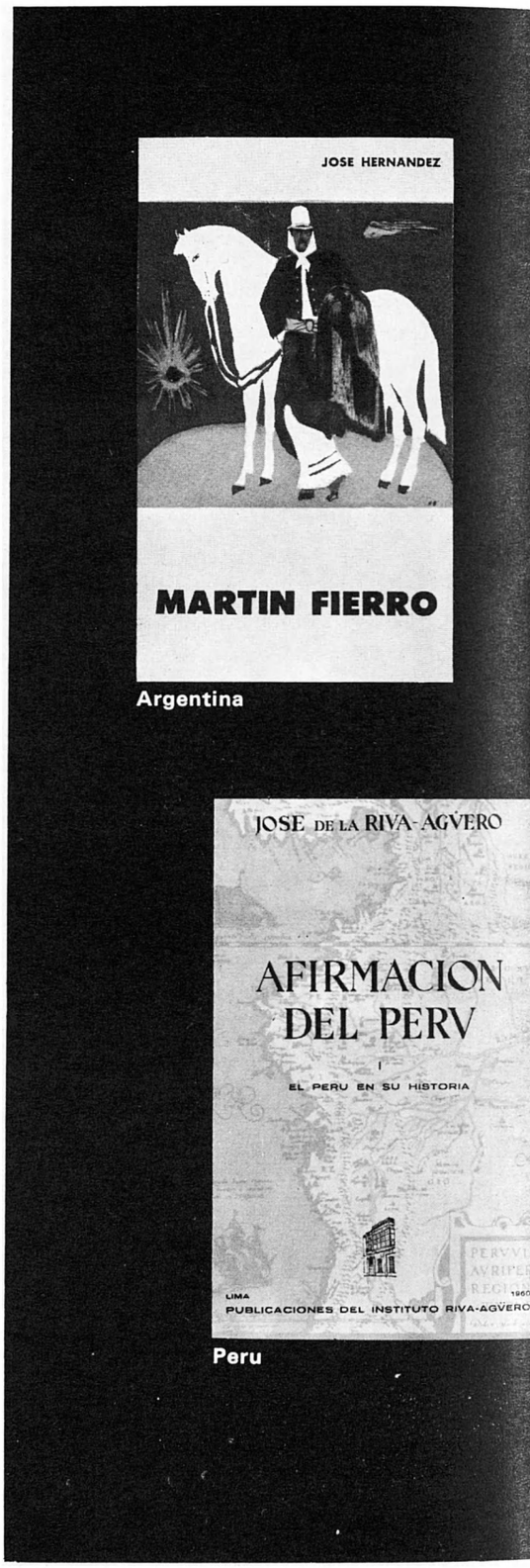
World book production as a whole increased by some 40% between 1952 and 1962, but dropped in several countries. Among middle-range producers whose publishing declined were Belgium (25% drop) and Italy (16%). Some countries made spectacular advances. Mainland China's production, increased tenfold in six years. U.S. production rose by 85% to rival Japan's for 4th world place; ten years earlier the U.S.A. was sixth. The new publishing status of English-speaking America is confirmed by the rise of Canada's production from 684 titles to 3,600 in ten years.

A barrier to books

One obstacle to the circulation of books is the diversity of the world's languages. Twelve main languages are spoken by more than three-quarters of the world's population in the following proportions: Chinese, 25%; English, 11%; Russian, 8.3%; Hindi, 6.25%; Spanish, 6.25%; German, 3.75%; Japanese, 3.75%; Bengali, 3%; Arabic, 2.7%; French, 2.7%; Portuguese, 2.5% and Italian, 2.1%. Written languages present a different picture. Using only eight languages it is possible to communicate with three-quarters of the people in the world: This time the breakdown is: English, 18.1%; Chinese, 16.9%; Russian, 15.9%; Spanish, 5.2%; German, 5%; Japanese, 5%; French, 3.2% and Italian, 2.4%.

Channel for free thought

The Netherlands has a long tradition of publishing and bookselling. When absolute monarchies were interfering with the flow of ideas in the 17th and 18th centuries, Dutch books kept open a channel for the expression of free thought. Today the Netherlands receives much from abroad (16% of its book production relates to translations) and exports a great deal. Between 1946 and 1960, its book exports rose from $1.3 million to $33 million. Out of 7,893 titles published in 1960, 1,140 were in foreign languages.

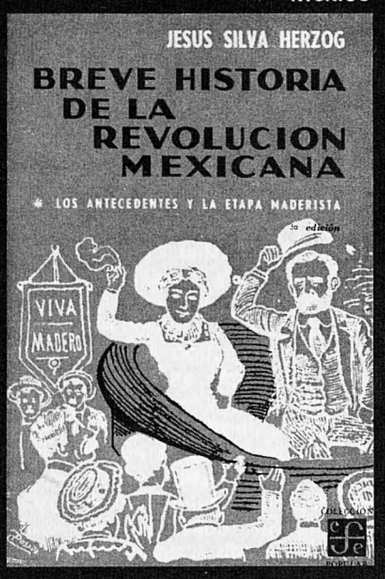


The growth of the Hispanic book market

Chile

Cuba

Mexico



SOME 145 million people live in the Spanish-speaking cultural area of the world, where prospects of an expanding book market are today limited by problems of economic development which vary from country to country.

Spain was the chief book supplier to Latin America until 1936, the year of the Spanish Civil War. The interruption of its book printing produced an overnight growth of publishing houses in the New World, mainly in Mexico and Argentina. After the Second World War this became a book production boom. More recently, inflation has become widespread on the Latin American continent and foreign currency restrictions have been introduced, thus limiting the purchase of paper, ink, machinery and other supplies and restricting payments for copyright in the case of translations. With the situation thus reversed, the sales of books produced in Spain are regaining their former importance in Latin America.

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Book exports from Spain to this vast region totalled five million pesetas in 1940; in 1963 they reached an all-time high of 1,348 million pesetas.

Over the past three years, Spanish book exports to Latin America have doubled. Spain's book production has increased 30% in the past five years and Latin America has taken 40% of these books.

In 1963, Spain's 743 publishing houses put on sale 8,694 original titles. These can be classed, with approximate figures, as follows: Literature, 2,800; social sciences, 1,800; applied sciences, 1,100; theology and religion, 1,000; history and geography, 700; fine arts, 500; pure sciences, 350; philology, 200; philosophy, 180; general subjects, 160.

About 14% of all books printed in Spain were translations of foreign works. In 1963, 694 titles were translated from English, 593 from French, 320 from German, 111 from Italian and 180 from other languages.

In Argentina, the really striking development in book publishing has come during the past thirty years. In 1936 its entire production consisted of 451 scientific and 372 literary works; by 1963, production had risen to 3,390 titles, and of these, 2,196 were chiefly made up of novels and short stories, geography books, school textbooks and dictionaries. In 1963 Argentina printed over 29 million books.

Argentina's book production (in terms of wholesale prices) has been estimated at 4 000 million pesos a year between 1960-1962. In 1963, Argentina exported nearly seven million copies of books and other publications. This figure excludes orders despatched by air.

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Argentina and Mexico are Spain's two chief competitors in the Latin American market. In Mexico, book production and sales have gone through a similar kind of process to that in Argentina. Mexico's annual production was less than 1,000 books between 1948 and 1955, but in 1962 it produced 3,760. Eustasio Garcia, the Argentinian publisher, has estimated that there are some 10,000 bookshops in Latin America, 900 of which are located in Mexico.

The official production and free distribution of primary school textbooks in Mexico in recent years deserves special mention. Since 1959, when the national plan of Mexico's Education Minister, Jaime Torres Bodet (a former Director-General of Unesco) went into operation, over 100 million textbooks have been distributed free of charge to schoolchildren. This year 21 million will be distributed.

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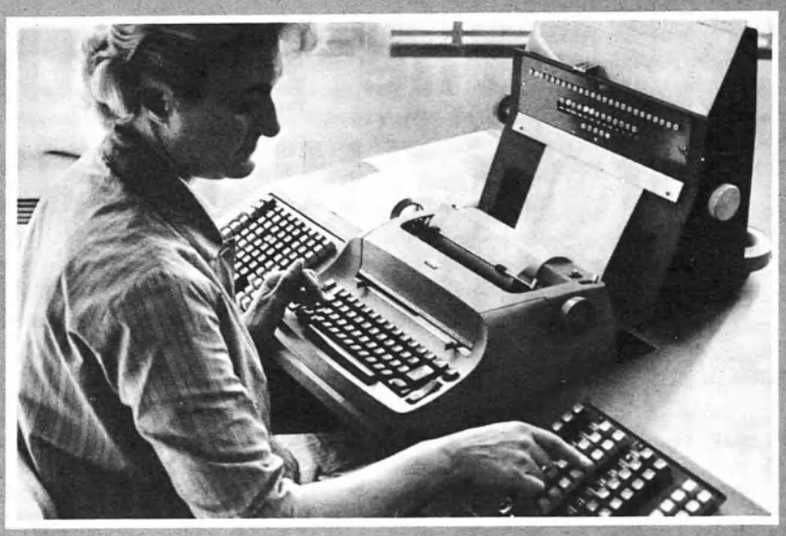
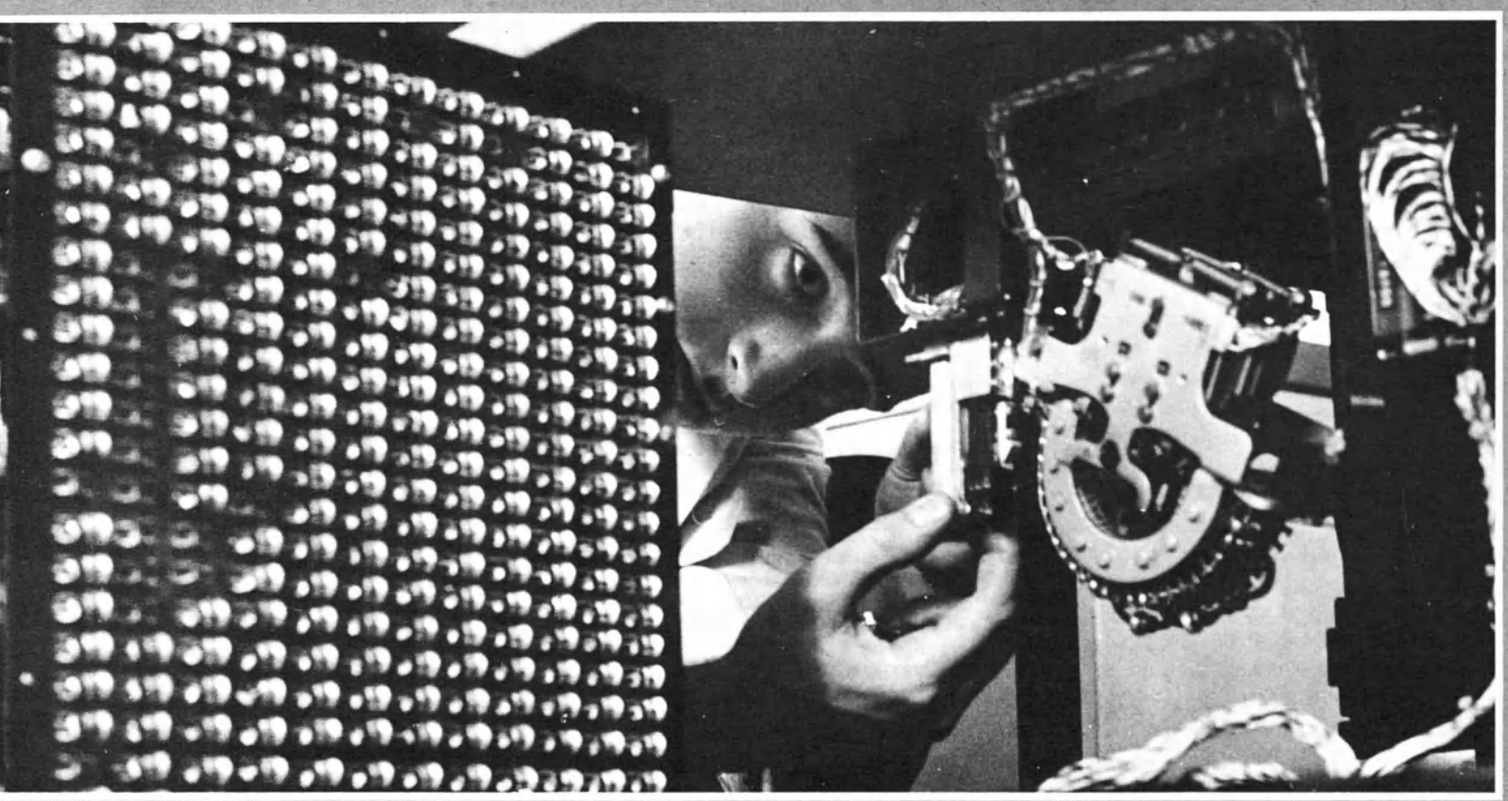
Brazil occupies a unique place in Latin America since, for linguistic reasons, it does not export its books to the rest of the continent, yet appears to have top place among book producers. Latest official statistics relate to 1959 when a total of 5,337 titles was published. After Argentina and Mexico in second and third places comes Chile which published 1,040 works in 1962. It is followed by Peru and Cuba with 791 and 736 titles respectively in 1963.

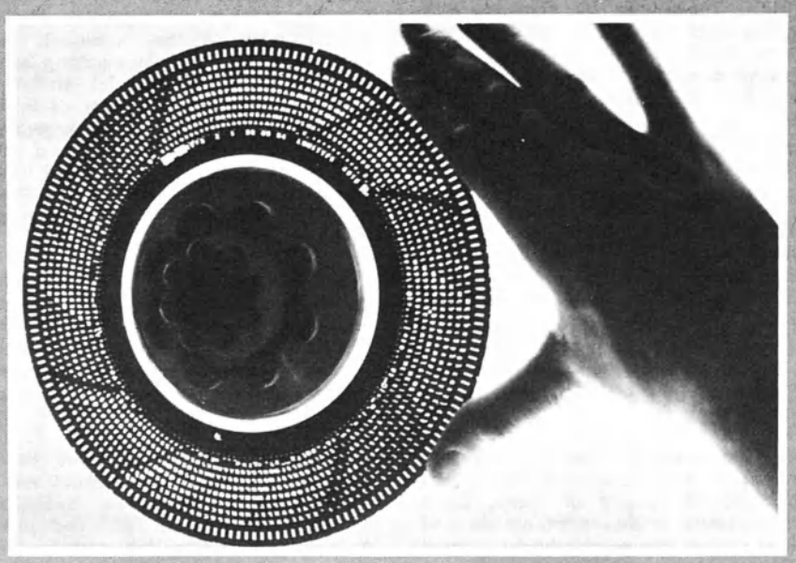
In Cuba, efforts to provide books for all sections of the population are made by different organizations. The "Editorial Nacional de Cuba", set up by the government in May 1962 and directed by the Cuban novelist, Alejo Carpentier, prints national and foreign works, on an average basis of 20,000 copies per title, but in some cases reaching the 50,000 and 100,000 mark. This national enterprise published 16,500,000 copies in 1963 and plans to reach 22 million this year.



Top: at the keyboard of a photocomposing machine, the operator selects a fresh type by moving a control on the auxiliary panel. Centre: the latest electronic equipment is increasingly used to direct and speed up photo-composition processes. Bottom: hundreds of characters cover this glass disc. As it rotates the image of each character selected is projected by a light and recorded on film.

BOOKS PRINTED WITH A CAMERA





UNTIL recently the two great advances in book printing were the use of movable type composed by hand and the introduction of metal type-casting machines in the 19th century. Today, a new era in printing has begun with the use of photocomposition, or filmsetting, which produces texts directly on film that can be used for engraving and printing, thus eliminating the use of raised type.

Book publishers can expect to benefit in terms of faster production and lower costs from this new technique as it becomes combined with new discoveries in electronics.

Since the first photocomposing machine was devised about 40 years ago a dozen or more different types have been developed. One ultra-modern one which is largely electronic in operation looks like an ordinary metal office desk with a built-in typewriter. The operator types texts on this central keyboard and selects the kind and size of type required on an auxiliary control board.

CONT'D ON PAGE 20

Book texts on tapes. Typed on the keyboard of a photocomposing machine texts are recorded in code on perforated tape. Photographic unit decodes tapes and produces film prints of the pages ready for engraving and printing.

Photos © Paul Almasy, Paris

BOOKS PRINTED WITH A CAMERA

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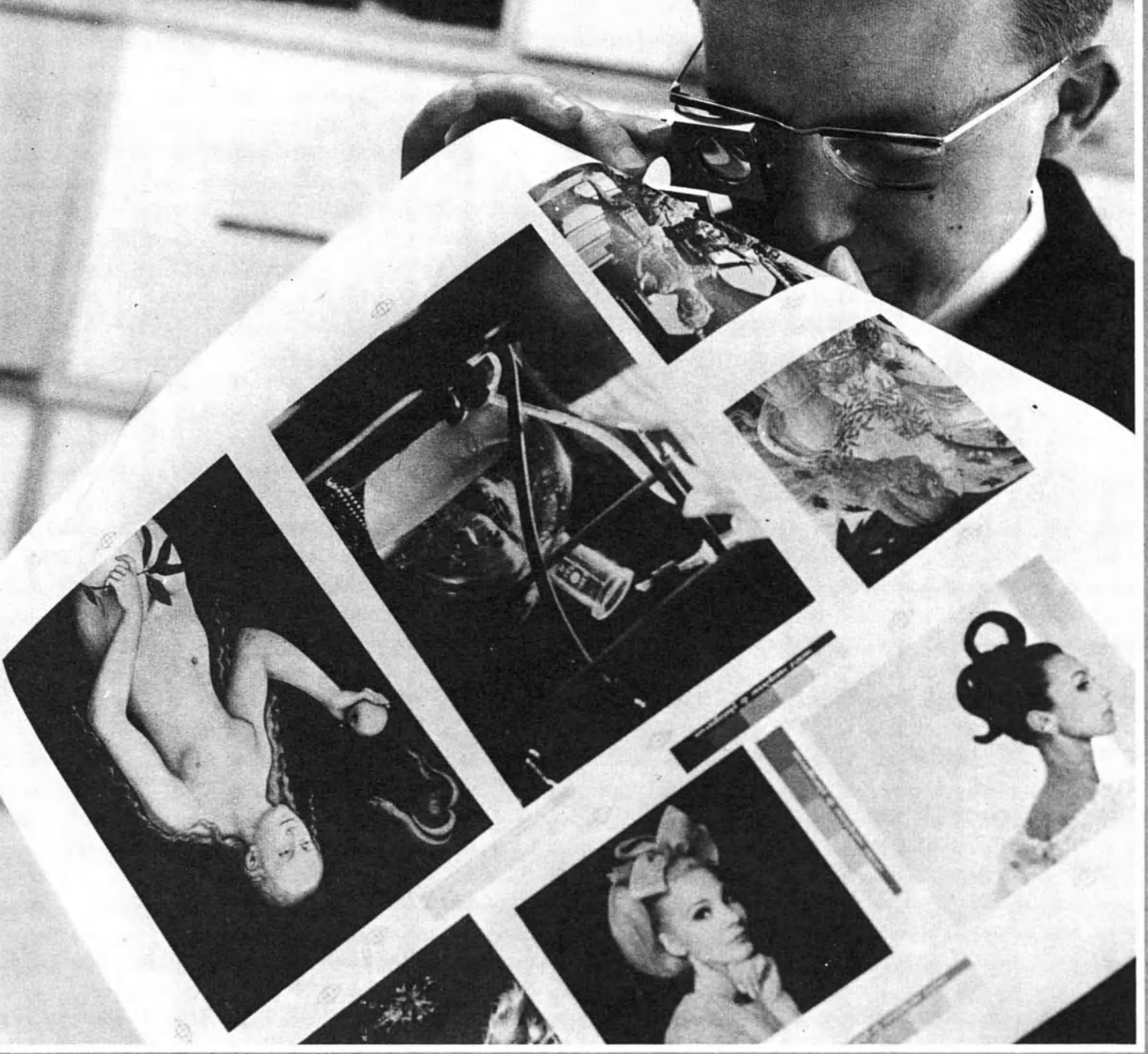


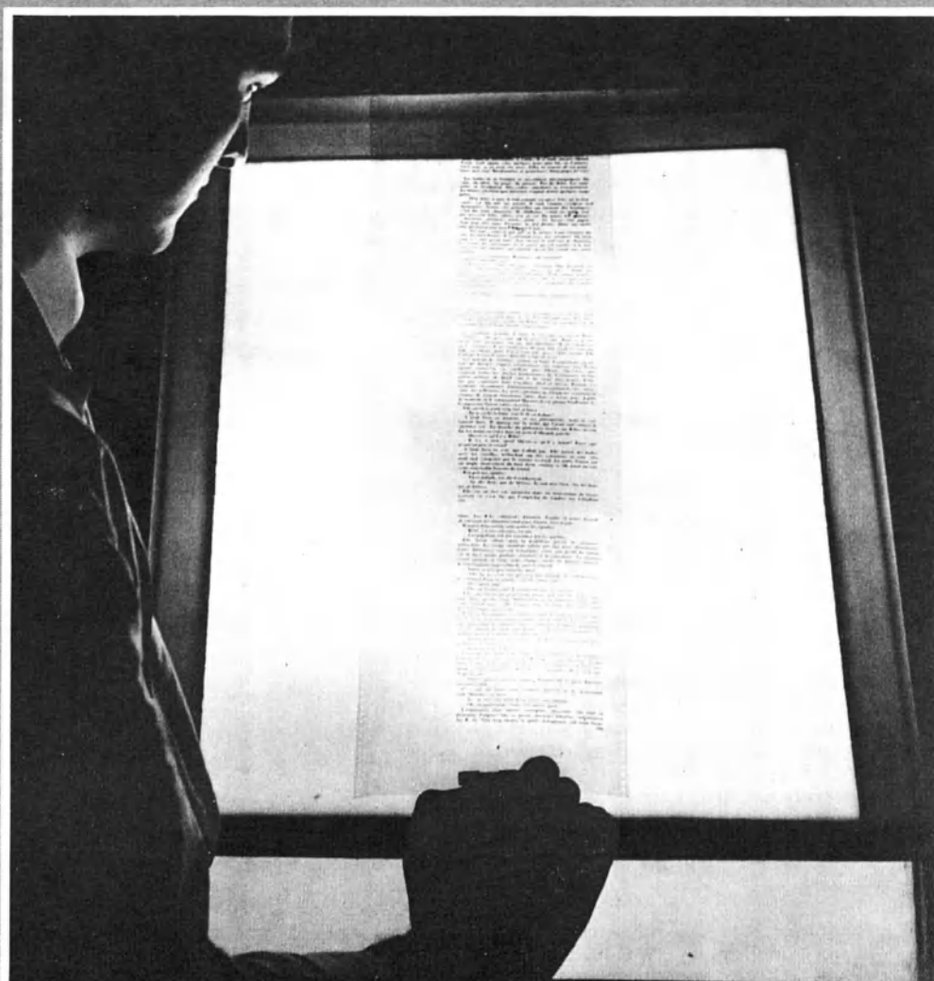
In modern book publishing, top-quality illustrations are not only found in works on art and de luxe editions but have also become a feature of low-priced publications. Every effort is made to attain the highest standards of reproduction. Left, colour illustrations are given an extra-close scrutiny. Below, a final check of pages composed directly on film.

A machine of this kind can compose texts directly on film or can record them in code on perforated tape. This can be stored and later fed into an electronically-operated photographic unit which automatically sets type on film in response to the information on the tape, working faster than human hands.

At some future time book publishers may deliver all their copy to the printer on tapes. Electronically-controlled machines will then decode the tapes and in a single operation produce film prints of the book pages ready for engraving and printing.

A big advantage of photocomposing machines is their compactness. An installation covering 50 square metres can do the work of present equipment needing ten times this space. In one machine a rotating disc bearing nearly 1,500 characters replaces over one and a half tons of lead matrixes needed in metal type casting.

Photosetting may also solve problems created by the intricate forms, vowel accents and, in some cases, the sheer volume of characters in some of the world's complex writing systems, for which metal type has often been found inadequate. Research has shown that photocomposing machines could do the job. A machine for the Chinese language, for example, would need only twenty-six signs on its basic keyboard to select any of the thousands of known characters.



UNESCO AND THE WORLD OF BOOKS

by Julian Behrstock

BOOKS permeate the whole of Unesco's programme to such an extent that it is difficult to isolate and define them as a separate factor. They are basic to the achievement of almost all of the Organization's objectives—universal primary education no less than the mutual appreciation of cultural values or the advancement of science and technology.

Unesco's interest in books stems from its Constitution, which assigns to it the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image" and of measures designed "to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published material produced by any of them." Twenty years later this Constitutional point was reaffirmed by the General Conference of Unesco in a resolution calling attention to "the importance of publishing activities" and laying the foundations for a new programme of action in the book field.

As this new programme takes shape, a backward glance at the work of the preceding two decades also shows a wide-ranging record of achievement. For example:

● A Universal Copyright Convention was established assuring a just recompense for authors and at the same time encouraging the publication and distribution of their works in countries other than their own. The Convention filled a significant gap in international copyright legislation.

● An international agreement was adopted removing tariff and other trade obstacles to the free flow of books. The agreement became widely accepted as an international standard for the unimpeded circulation of books throughout the world. Two other international agreements granted facilities for the international exchange of educational and government publications.

● A coupon scheme was instituted overcoming foreign currency difficulties. Some 27 million dollars in coupons were issued for the purchase of books and other publications.

● Postal and transport charges for the dispatch of books were lowered as a result of Unesco proposals to international rate-fixing organizations.

● In order to help chart systematically the world pattern of the book trade, a recommendation was adopted establishing international standards for the uniform classification of book statistics.

● A centre for the promotion of reading materials in South Asia was established at Karachi in 1958. It conducted workshops and seminars on all aspects of the book trade; encouraged the development of professional associations; awarded some 50 fellowships for training abroad; and was responsible for the appearance of about 400 publications in the languages of the region.

● In Africa two centres were set up which helped to promote educational publishing. One, at Accra (Ghana), held seminars in West and East Africa on the preparation of textbooks, including the training of authors and illustrators. The other, at Yaoundé (Cameroon), equipped with a publishing unit, printed textbooks for various classroom levels as well as reading materials for newly literate adults. Through the intermediary of Unesco, textbooks for African schools were also printed abroad without charge.

● Writers in the developing countries were encouraged and trained at literary workshops and were awarded travel grants for the gathering of material. In the specialized field of science writing, the first of a series of pilot projects was launched at Sao Paulo (Brazil) where Latin American professors acquired training to undertake local authorship of science materials for the classroom.

● To stimulate and develop public libraries, which in some countries account for the purchase of half of all works distributed, model libraries were created at New Delhi, Medellin (Colombia) and Enegu (Nigeria). Training centres for librarianship were established at Dakar (Senegal) and Kampala (Uganda). National bibliographical centres were similarly assisted and publications issued which provided up-to-date information on the availability of books.

● A Unesco Collection of Representative Works served to make more widely known, in translation, outstanding literary works drawn from diverse cultures. Almost 200 works were translated from some 40 different languages and published in English and French. *Index Translationum* was published annually listing books published throughout the world during the previous year which are translations from the original version. The 16th edition in 1965 listed some 35,000 translations published in 69 countries (see p. 34).

● Studies were published, such as "Books for All", by R.E. Barker, which reviewed and focussed public attention on obstacles to the flow of books. ("The Revolution in Books", by Robert Escarpit, which has just been published in French [see page 4] is a sequel to the Barker study published ten years earlier). A brochure on "Books for the Developing Countries" has been published in 1965.

● Studies on books were but one aspect of Unesco's concern with publishing during the past two decades. Unesco initiated or itself published a total of some 4,000 titles, in which an array of subjects in all its fields of interest were looked at from an international point of view.

● An indirect contribution to book promotion was the Unesco campaign to combat illiteracy and so to add to the ranks of the reading public the many millions at present unable to read or write, who number more than two-fifths of the adult population of the globe.

The list could be lengthened but it suffices to show the broad range and concrete character of book activities throughout the whole of Unesco's programme.

These activities evolved during a period of swift change in the world pattern of book production and consumption. It was during this period from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960's that advances in printing, publishing and distri-

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

Textbooks make up 90 % of all books in the developing nations

bution techniques made it feasible to produce low-priced good-quality books on a vast scale. It was then, too, that the paperback phenomenon achieved the proportions of a "revolution", in which a million copies a day were sold in one country alone.

AT the same time, although the demand for books in the developing countries surged forward on the tide of independance, production remains sharply below the requirements of their peoples. Asia (Japan excepted), with more than half of the world's population, accounts for only 17 per cent of the 400,000 or so book titles appearing annually throughout the world. In Africa, fewer than ten countries regularly publish books and the number of titles is less than two per cent of the world total.

Hence the larger proportion by far of books being read in most parts of Asia and especially of Africa continues to be produced in technically advanced countries—chiefly those of Europe and North America. Yet, great as are the present needs for books in the developing countries, the spread of literacy and increases in population and per capita income presage a more acute situation in the years ahead.

Increasing the flow of books from present world centres of production, however necessary, is recognized to be only a stop-gap solution. National aspirations, expansion of domestic industry and, above all, the production of books closely attuned to the readers' culture and tastes—all these factors impel the developing countries to establish their own capacity to write, publish and distribute books.

The creation of indigenous publishing industries in Asia and Africa, however, encounters formidable deficiencies in almost all the resources and skills required, ranging from authorship to printing facilities, from paper supplies to managerial personnel.

The first claim on meagre publishing facilities, moreover, inevitably has been the production of books for the classroom. So pronounced has been the trend that textbooks are now estimated to account for no less than 90 per cent of all books read in the developing countries. The result is an undiversified publishing pattern, offering relatively limited fare for general readers, including new literates. Thus, the "book gap", as it has come to be termed, widens as the extension of education extends the demand for textbooks to train new generations of readers whose book appetites will, in turn, require a more variegated publishing output.

IT was against this background of striking technological progress, on the one hand, and of vast unfulfilled needs, on the other, that the General Conference of Unesco, in November 1964, considered a proposal submitted by the delegation of Czechoslovakia for Unesco to embark on a new programme of book development. Two months earlier a similar proposal had emerged from a meeting convened at Washington, D.C. by the U.S. Agency for International Development in which it was recommended that Unesco should assume a role of leadership in the book development field. The premise underlying both proposals was that, in addition to its continuing book activities, the time had now come for Unesco to make a concerned attack on the central problem of helping to build indigenous publishing capacity in the developing countries.

The General Conference resolution, adopted unanimously, noted the importance of publications in "fostering mutual understanding and economic and social development." It called for action "to stimulate and encourage the publication of low-priced books, particularly for newly literate adults and for young people in the developing countries." Finally, it invited all concerned to study means of strengthening international co-operation in the field of publishing and dissemination of literature.

More specifically, the General Conference took three decisions. The first was that the development programme would be launched with a series of regional conferences, the first for Asia in 1966; a second, for Africa, was envisaged for 1967; and a third was to be held subsequently for Latin America. Secondly, primary responsibility for the development programme was centred in one section of the Unesco Secretariat, thus establishing for the first time a focal point for the Organization's diverse book activities. Thirdly, the General Conference invited the Director-General to consider presenting for 1967-1968 a co-ordinated programme designed to promote the production and distribution of books in the developing countries.

THE first of the regional conferences is scheduled for Tokyo in the Spring of 1966. It will bring together experts from all Asian Member States and in the diverse fields involved ranging from authorship and copyright to printing and publishing techniques. The purpose will be to assess the long-term book needs of the Asian countries and to draw up a programme of action.

It may be anticipated that the Asian countries will look to the Conference above all for help in formulating systematic policies for national book development in which books are assured of adequate priority within the framework of economic and social planning. The Conference may also assist the more advanced countries in shaping and co-ordinating their bilateral aid programmes so as to meet more effectively the needs of the Asian countries.

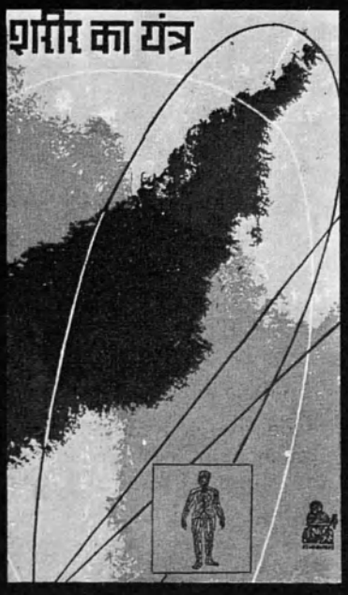
It is hoped that the reports emerging from the Asian and the subsequent African and Latin American meetings will also serve as a basis for increased international assistance. A parallel exists with the similar survey conducted by Unesco in the three regions in the 1960-1962 period on development of press, radio, film and television and which resulted in increased recognition of the mass media as a sphere for technical assistance. The forthcoming cycle of conferences should similarly establish the claim for books.

A hopeful sign for the future of the book development programme is the confidence and interest it has already elicited not only from governments but also from the publishing profession. There is an evident feeling that Unesco has a significant role to play in helping to harness the forces of the revolution in books for the benefit of all.

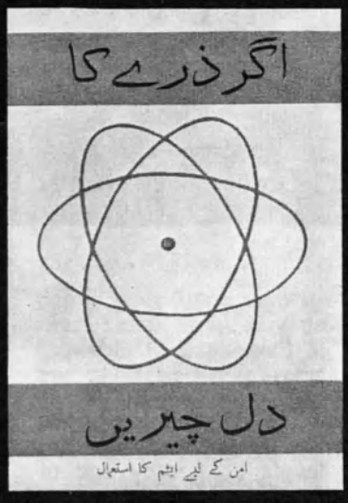
IULIAN BEHRSTOCK *is head of Unesco's Division of Free Flow of Information, In the Department of Mass Communication, which deals with Unesco's programme for book development.*

THE DILEMMAS OF PUBLISHING IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

by Om Prakash



A Hindi manual on anatomy, published in New Delhi.



"The Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy", Urdu booklet prepared with Unesco assistance and published in Pakistan.

"Africa" by Vidwan N. Subrahmanian, an Indian author. This book in Tamil was published in India with Unesco's aid.

A collection of Japanese short stories translated into the Malay language and published at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia).

"Our Occupations", a collection of articles on Thai careers published in Bangkok (Thailand) with Unesco's aid.

OVER 800 million people, or one quarter of the world's inhabitants, live in South-East Asia (1). Yet of 400,000 titles of books produced throughout the world in 1962, only 20,000 or one twentieth of the total were published in this region.

It is evident that book publishing in South-East Asia as a whole is in an undeveloped stage. While twelve countries together publish two-thirds of the world's books, only one of them—India—is in South-East Asia. Book production in other countries of the region is extremely limited.

The production of translations is similarly limited. Of a world total of 32,787 translations produced in 1962, only 1,455, or 4.4 % of the total, were published in South-East Asia.

South-East Asia's role in the international book trade further illustrates the embryonic state of its publishing industry. Although there is a substantial volume of exports of books from Indonesia, India and the Philippines to the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively, book exports from the greater part of the region are negligible. In contrast, imports of books, periodicals and other printed matter may represent almost one per cent of a country's total imports.

Underdevelopment of book publishing in South-East Asia results from a host of restrictive elements, ranging from factors which directly limit the book market, such as shortages of paper and equipment, to handicaps of a more general nature, such as low purchasing power and poor transport facilities.

The biggest single obstacle to a wider circulation of reading materials is doubtless the high average level of illiteracy in the region. However, illiteracy rates vary widely betwen individual countries as the following figures show:

Afghanistan and Nepal (95 to 99 %); Iran (85 to 89 %); Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan and Rep. of Viet-Nam (80 to 84 %); India (70 to 74 %); Cambodia (65 to 69 %); Malaysia

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(1) *Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, Viet-Nam.*

Dearth of scientific books for children

(50 to 54 %); Burma (40 to 44 %); Ceylon and Thailand (30 to 34 %); Philippines (25 to 29 %).

Low income constitutes another major barrier to increased reading. While low-cost paperbacks may offer a means of extending book sales, per capita income is in fact so limited as to affect the purchase of even the cheapest books. Only Ceylon, Iran, Malaysia and the Philippines can claim an income of $101-300 per capita. All the other countries in the area fall within the less than $100 range.

A third major obstacle to increased production of reading materials arises from the region's deteriorating terms of trade. Suffering from a deficit in export over import earnings, nearly all South-East Asian countries are finding it increasingly difficult to import the materials and equipment they need for their national development efforts.

Printing paper looms large in these requirements.

Of the three newsprint producers in the region—India, Pakistan and Cambodia—India's production covers only 20 per cent of its own demand, and only Pakistan has an export surplus (some 15,000 tons in 1963). India is the only substantial South-East Asian producer of printing paper other than newsprint and writing paper but, here again, consumption (234,400 tons in 1962) leaves no surplus for export. Nor does any other country in the region export these grades of paper.

In contrast with the discouraging outlook for the development of paper-making in South-East Asia, a huge increase in demand is foreseen. On the basis solely of population growth and per capita income in the Far East, the demand for newsprint in that region, excluding mainland China, is expected to rise from 672,000 tons in 1955 to 2,920,000 tons in 1975.

The reduction of illiteracy acts as a powerful incentive to the demand for printed matter. In countries where illiteracy is very prevalent, its reduction by one per cent is estimated to have the same impact on the demand for printing paper as a five per cent increase in purchasing power.

However, it must be noted that the demand for books at prices which the Asian peoples can afford has not yet been adequately met. Low levels of literacy and of purchasing power, coupled with the absence of wide reading habits, continue to limit the production and distribution of reading materials. Publishers of general books and books specially suited for children and new literates are far fewer than those engaged in the publication of educational or textbooks.

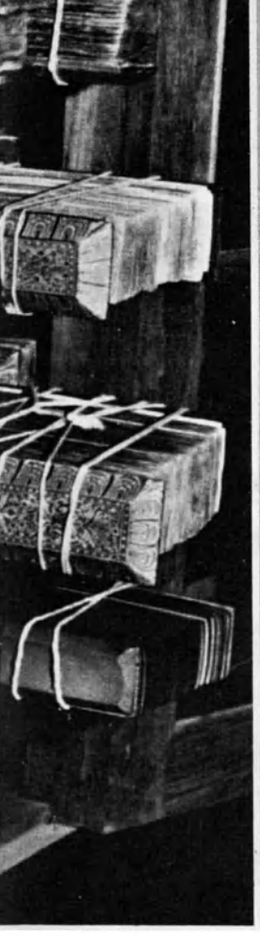
In the educational field, too, many countries continue to rely on imports or on local branches of foreign publishing houses. In several Asian countries, European languages introduced by the former European powers are still used as media for advanced instruction.

There are general publishers of more than 50 years' standing in Ceylon, Burma, Pakistan and India. In their early years, they were almost exclusively engaged in publishing religious books; some used to publish works on mythology and astrology as well.

The number of regular book publishers in the region is not available and would be difficult to estimate. Many countries have no means of counting the publishers or booksellers.

PUBLISHING is a relatively small and unprofitable business in most countries of South-East Asia, and it has failed to attract capital. Scope for general publishing is extremely limited. Recently, with progressively wider use of national languages in instruction, there have been increased activities and investments in educational publishing. There are few large, well-organised publishing firms in the region which can match their counterparts in the West. The paucity of capital for publishing will persist as long as the demand for general books continues to be meagre.

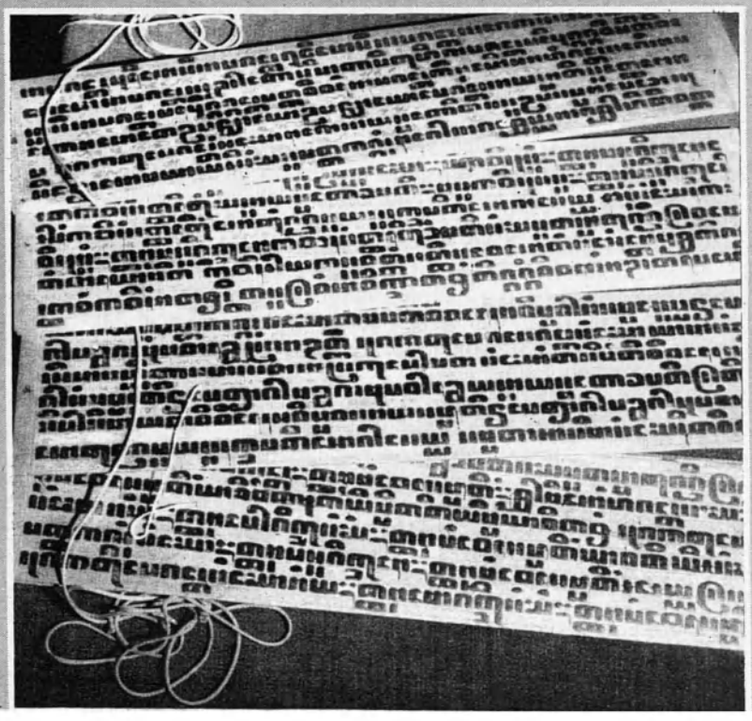
Meanwhile, publishers need to depend upon their own limited resources. In no South-East Asian country will



Palm leaf books & 'tamarind seed' script

In past centuries many of the books produced in South-East Asia were devoted to religion. Tens of thousands of religious works are now preserved in the extensive library of Adyar, near Madras (India). Left, sixteenth-century Buddhist texts written on palm leaves. Linked by cords, these manuscripts include 47 volumes of the Pali Tipitaka (canonical works) from Ceylon. Right, another manuscript from the Adyar library: a 17th-century Buddhist manuscript from Burma embellished with red lacquer and gold. The text, written in "tamarind seed" script, sets down rules for Buddhist monks.

Photos © Francis Brunel, Paris



banks lend funds with printed material as collateral security. Loans from various other sources are not as easily available to publishers as to other trades, with the result that their activities remain cramped. In many countries of the region, government loans are available to small industries, including the printing industry. Such facilities are, however, denied to publishers.

Publishing is generally conducted by small units which are either owned individually or in partnership. The number of nationally based joint-stock companies, with larger capital resources, is very limited.

Only a small percentage of books have a chance of being reprinted; most publications go through only the first edition. There are few books, except religious and traditional ones, which could be called "best-sellers" in the modern sense.

The average first printing order for a general book in Singapore is 5,000 copies; in Ceylon, 2,000; in Burma, 3,000; in Indonesia, 5,000 to 10,000; in Iran, 1,000 to 10,000; in Pakistan, 5,000; and in India, 1,000 to 3,000.

For books for children and new literates, the first printing orders are for 5,000 copies in Singapore; 5,000 in Ceylon and Burma; 5,000 to 20,000 in Indonesia; 2,000 in Iran; 2,500 in Pakistan; and 2,000 to 10,000 in India.

The largest first printing orders are given to educational books. They amount to 20,000 in Singapore; 7,500 to 50,000 in Ceylon; 20,000 to 30.000 in Iran; and 5,000 to 100,000 and more in India.

University textbooks are printed in editions of 2,000 in Burma, 3,000 to 5,000 in Indonesia and 2,500 to 5,000 in Pakistan.

The average price of books for children and new literates varies, but considering the average capacity and inclination to buy books in these countries, the prices must be considered high. Until books are priced more cheaply and printed in much larger numbers they will fail to be widely used in South-East Asia.

Subjects for books for children and new literates are folk tales, stories, religious and moral instruction and biography and travel. The publication of books on developments in science has been started recently.

There is a dearth in all the South-East Asian countries of scientific books for children and new literates, particularly in national languages. Owing to the lack of printing facilities, few translations of such books are published and attempts made in this field have not been very successful.

The production of reading materials for mass consumption suffers many handicaps in South-East Asia. Some help, by way of subsidies or assured purchases, would be required to effect a break-through. Unesco, through its programme to stimulate the publication of reading materials in the region, has subsidized the production in certain Asian countries of selected titles in order to promote international understanding (1).

Franklin Publications (U.S.A.) have also subsidized certain publishers in Pakistan and several other countries to this end, by meeting translation expenses and part of the promotional costs. Franklin Publications charge a small percentage of royalties on books thus assisted.

THERE has been little agreement among countries of the region as to what constitutes a "book", a "newspaper" or a "magazine". Ceylon defines a book as "any number of pages permanently bound between two covers"; this includes pamphlets, booklets, magazines and periodicals. A book is "a work of eight pages or more" in Indonesia. Iran defines a book as "any printed material, being bound or to be bound within the importing country." The Philippine definition is "a volume, with or without covers consisting of more than 100 pages." This ambiguity creates continual complications, particularly for book importing and exporting countries, but should now be resolved by the latest Unesco definition of a book (see page 15).

The distribution of books in South-East Asia does not present a very happy picture either. Apart from bookshops, other outlets are small bookstalls, pavement bookhawkers and the newsagents. The latter are poorly organized and are not dependable outlets financially. Few of them have

(1) *A Unesco Regional Centre for Reading Materials was set up in 1958 at Karachi, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, to promote the publication and distribution to an increasingly wide public of appropriate reading materials in their national languages.*

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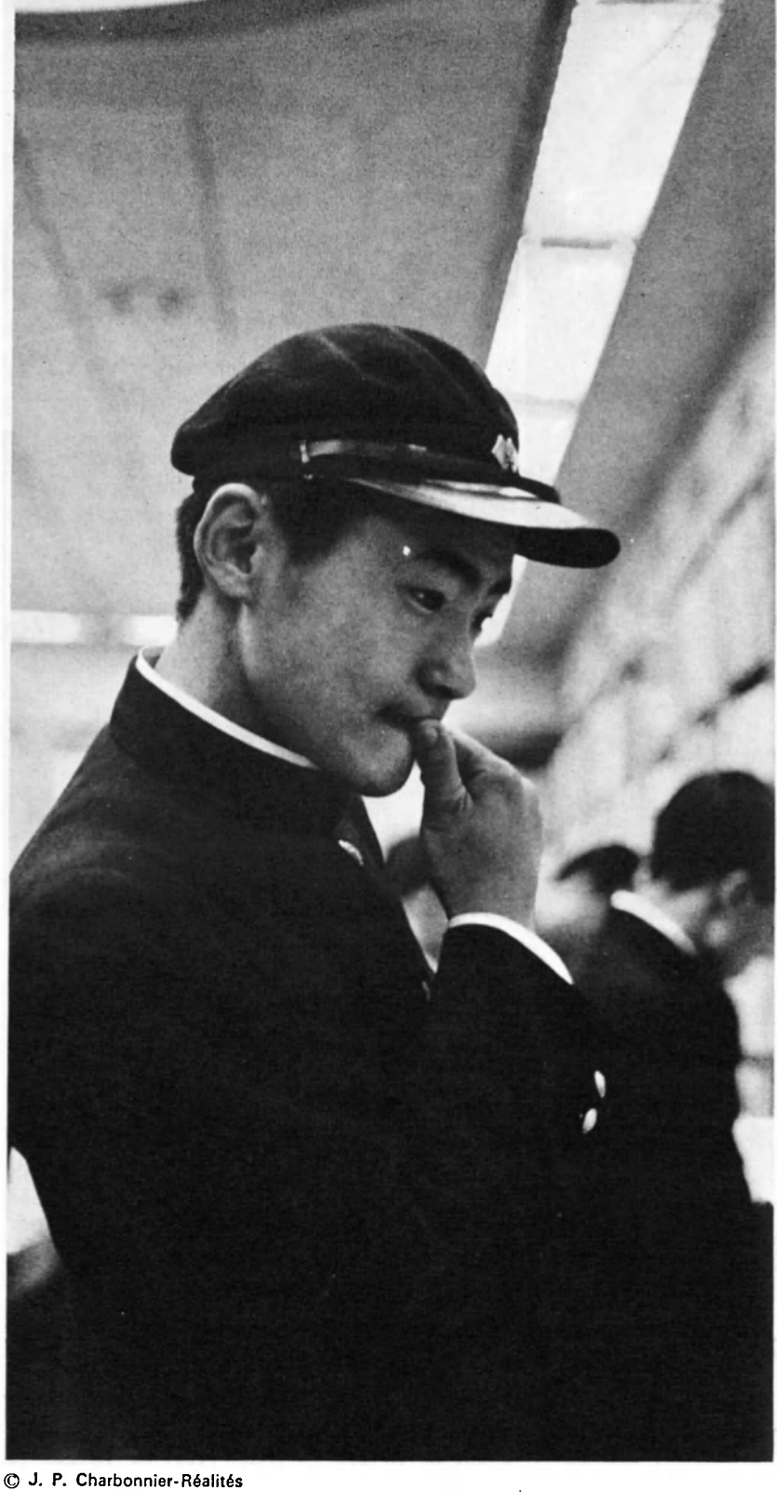
Red-tape and unfair competition

bank accounts, or the will or capacity to cater to intelligent demands. Newsagents are little interested in books unless they are low-priced, fast-selling items such as paperbacks. Regular investment in stocks of books is practised by the better type of bookshops and in most South-East Asia countries these deal in imported books rather than in books published locally in the national language. Booksellers who stock books in national languages prefer to deal in fast-selling educational books. The distribution of general books faces great handicaps.

One factor hindering the growth of the booktrade in all countries of South-East Asia is widespread price-cutting and cutthroat competition. The published price of a book does not mean much, since a buyer can haggle to obtain a rebate on its face value. In the absence of a strong demand for books, a publisher or bookseller has little inclination to hold on to a book rather than sell it at the cut price offered. The bookseller continually presses the publisher to grant a higher discount so that after he has allowed a discount to his retail buyer, he will still have some margin left for himself. The result is that, even though the bookseller may be getting a fairly high discount on the published price of a book, he does not have enough margin to meet the expenses or make a profit. Bookselling remains a very unlucrative business which fails to give the support expected of it by the publishing industry.



© J. P. Charbonnier-Réalités

AS earnings from the publication of translated books in most South-East Asian countries are meagre, many western authors and publishers are reluctant to assign translation rights to publishers of this region. Prices of translated books are much lower than the original publications, though editions are small and must carry the additional burden of translation. In addition, a foreign publisher has no recourse when an Asian publisher defaults in the payment of royalties. Western publishers consequently tend to demand heavy advances on royalties which South-East Asian publishers find it difficult to pay.

In most South-East Asian countries licences must be obtained for the import of books. Iran and Singapore are exceptions. In Pakistan books priced at Rs. 150.00 ($30.00) can be imported for personal use without a licence. In India even non-commercial institutions such as universities and established libraries must apply to obtain a licence for books which they may decide to import themselves. In Burma, restriction on the import of books from hard currency countries is comparatively stringent, and in Indonesia an importer must obtain government approval for each title if foreign exchange is to be officially provided. In almost all parts of the region, systems for obtaining import licences are cumbersome and complicated by excessive red tape.

The developing countries of South-East Asia could benefit greatly from the "paperback revolution". Prospects for the publication of paperbacks in the region are not yet encouraging, however. The number of publishers engaged in publishing paperbacks is small, as are the number of copies and titles they issue.

In Singapore, six publishers at present produce paperbacks, the initial printing order being 5,000 copies per title. Ceylon has yet to begin publishing these books. In Burma a number of publishers are now producing paperbacks, with the first printing order limited to 5,000 copies. Two publishers in Indonesia and four in Iran are engaged in this type of production with their first editions averaging 10,000 copies each. In Pakistan, publishers have not yet taken to paperbacks seriously. One or two publishers have tried to establish themselves in this field but their first printing orders do not exceed 4,000 copies. In India a number of publishers have successfully undertaken paperback publishing in Hindi and various other languages, though business now seems to be slowing down because of a heavy percentage of unsold returns from newstands. Publishers in Hindi, the official language, have had good sales results, with first printing orders varying between 5,000 and 25,000 copies.

Most of the successful paperback publishers in the West use newsprint. Because of the shortage of domestic newsprint in South-East Asia, the authorities severely restrict its use for paperbacks. Good quality newsprint which could be used for books is mostly imported and can be obtained only in limited quantities by special permit and import licence. Import and excise duties on newsprint increase the cost of paperbacks. Small printing orders are another major cause of high prices. In comparison to average purchasing power in the United States, for example, which produces 25 and 35 cent "pocket books," the price of paperbacks in India, Pakistan and Indonesia should be no more than a quarter of a rupee ($0.05), whereas the actual cost is one rupee. Paperbacks in

21-volume Japanese novel sells 11 million copies

The Japanese publishing industry, the world's fifth largest, enjoyed the best year in ten years in 1964: 342 million books were produced, comprising 32,229 titles of which 14,000 were new—an increase of 17 % over the previous year. Average price per book was 360 yen (about a dollar) and the value of books published totalled 128,000 million yen ($356 million).

Books published in 1964 included 503 titles in general works, 548 in philosophy, 1,112 in history and geography, 1,253 in economics, 1,765 in engineering, 4,586 in literature, 5,433 in reference books, 3,078 in paperbacks, 2,918 in children's books and 219 in dictionaries.

The big increase in production during 1964 is due to several factors and above all to a rising standard of living. Nowadays Japan's bookshops are always crowded. Sales of dictionaries and encyclopedias are greater than ever.

Book sales are also being boosted by an increased interest in history as Japan approaches the 100th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration which marked the country's appearance as a modern state. Historical novels are therefore enjoying great success. One novel, consisting of the 21-volume "Tokugawa Ieyasu" by Sohachi Yamaoka, has sold 11 million copies. It depicts the adventures and love of the first Tokugawa Shogunate.

By April 1964, paperbacks represented 20% of Japan's publishing activity and this proportion is still growing. But the increasing demand for large-format volumes, which represent the other end of the price range in publishing, shows the existence of a growing market for high-quality works. Publishers earn greater profits from this type of work even though fewer copies are printed. One of Japan's 1964 best-sellers was "The Diary of Anne Frank", translated from its Dutch language edition (700,000 copies).

Shin-Ichi Hasegawa.

South-East Asia cannot, in fact, be considered as "low-cost". They have appeared to be cheap to the buyer only because in the usual hard-bound editions of 1,000 to 3,000 copies he has been purchasing similar titles at about three rupees per copy.

The variety of languages is another serious problem. In Ceylon there are two languages, Singhala and Tamil, in which books could be produced. Suitable languages in Indonesia are Bhasa Indonesia and Malay. Both use the same script and are very similar except for differences in spellings. The governments of Indonesia and Malaysia have made efforts to standardize spellings on a state level. Other Indonesian languages include Javanese, Madurese and Sundanese, but there is little demand for books in them. In Pakistan, books in Urdu and Bengali are required while in India books must be produced in Hindi, Urdu, Kashmiri, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Oriya, Assamese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. In Burma only one language (Burmese) is required for books and in Iran only Farsi. In Cambodia, Philippines and Laos books must be produced in Khmer, Tagalog and Laotian, respectively.

Ceylon, Pakistan, Philippines, India and Malaysia also use books in English to some extent. All scripts employed in South-East Asia are non-ideographic and, with the exception of Farsi, Pushto, Kashmiri and Urdu, are written and printed from left to right.

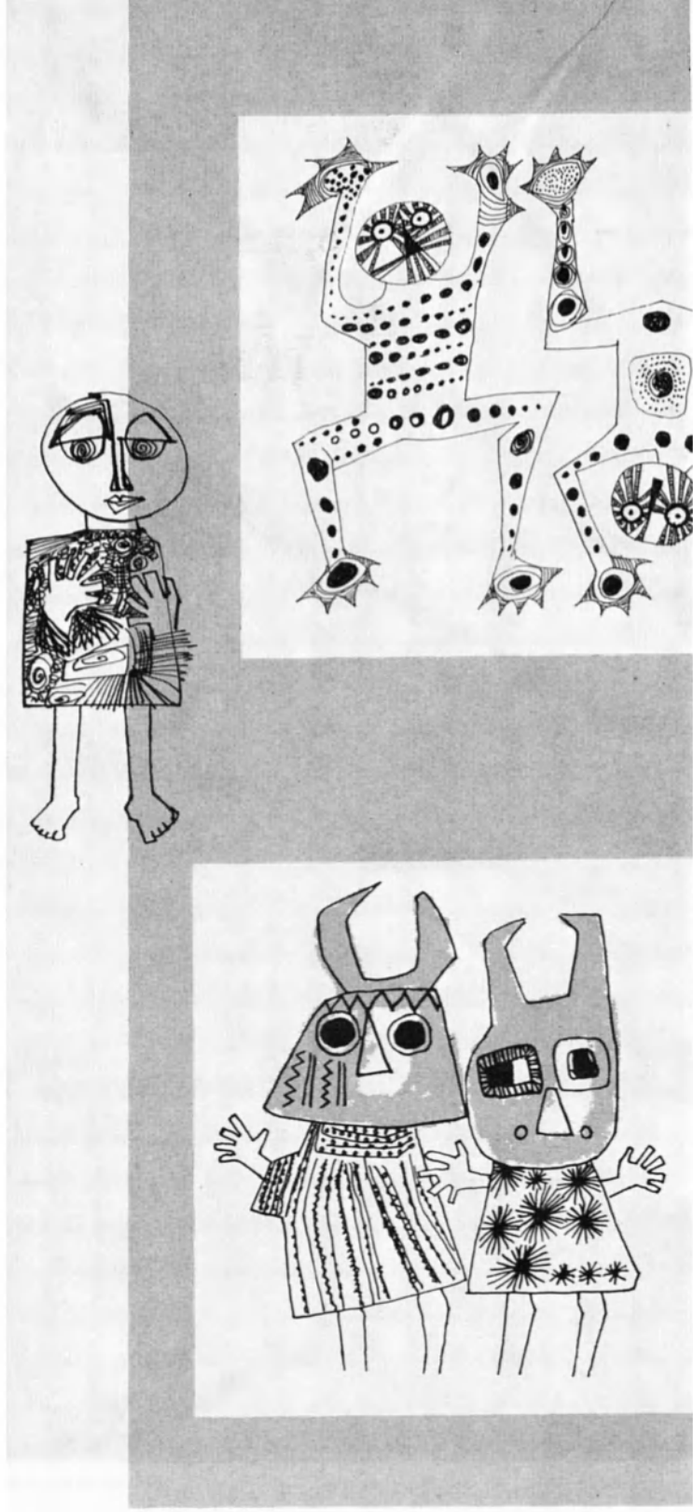
The difficulties involved in producing well-designed books, particularly scientific books, for children and new literates in South-East Asia cannot be easily overcome if left to individual effort. Most publishers of the region recognize that wherever possible, co-operative effort should be undertaken to promote the mass production of reading materials for children and new literates. Better quality will thus be assured and costs reduced. Suitable subjects for co-operatively produced books could include elementary science, public health, and Asian folklore, philosophy, flora and fauna. Such books could become an instrument for better understanding among South-East Asian countries.

OM PRAKASH *Indian specialist in publishing and book distribution, is president of the All-India Hindi Publishers' Association, in Delhi. For a fuller account of this subject by Mr. Prakash, see the Unesco booklet, just published, "Books for the Developing Countries: Asia-Africa" (price 3/- stg; $ 0.50).*

A continent in quest of a publishing industry

A Unesco survey in Africa

by Clifford M. Fyle



IN many African countries the absence of a sufficient number of readers is a major obstacle to large-scale publishing, if not to publishing generally. Total populations in general are small. Some ten countries have between a quarter of a million and a million inhabitants; seventeen countries have between one million and five million and sixteen have populations of over five million.

Thus while half of these countries might possibly support a flourishing publishing industry on the strength of their population, the rest will necessarily be limited to a few publishers each. And in the six countries with no more than 300,000 to 400,000 inhabitants even a single publisher may be able to maintain only a struggling business.

But this visualizes a situation where everyone can read and is therefore a potential user of books. This we know is far from the case. The number of adult literates is small in all African countries. The reading public consists largely of the school population. In Sierra Leone less than 25% of the potential school population between the ages of five and twelve was attending school in 1962. And Sierra Leone is not among the least advanced African countries in education.

However, rapid strides are being made in educational development, including the introduction of free or compulsory primary education in some countries and the expansion in others of the number of schools and universities as well as improvement in the quality of education. Such developments are bound to act as a stimulus to publishing.

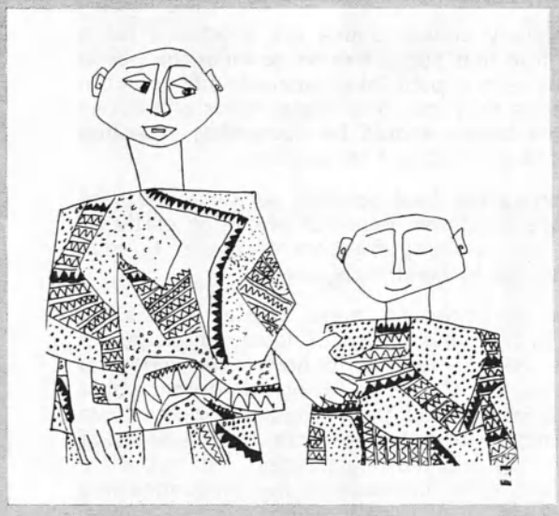
Mass literacy programmes, especially for adults, are being launched and are making great headway. Ghana has a programme for wiping out illiteracy within ten years and the Sudan plans to make 200,000 people literate during the next five years.

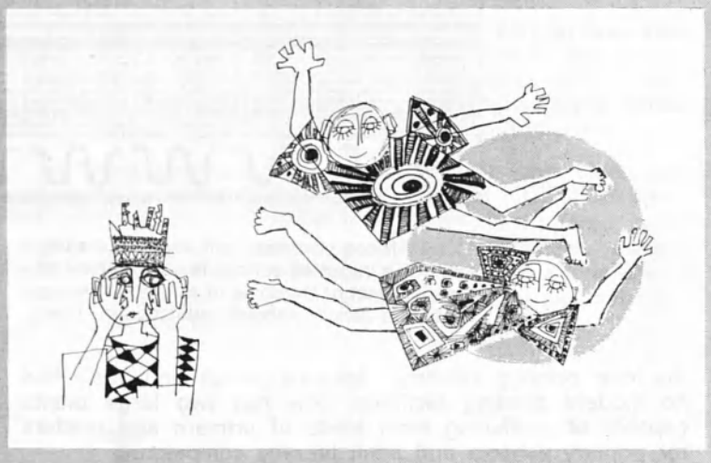
Many African countries therefore feel that lack of readership is a temporary situation and that it has ceased to be the chief obstacle to the development of publishing. But high production costs and the shortage of proper distribution outlets are still seen as serious problems.

The creation and growth of publishing industries in the developing countries depend above all on national book needs. A Unesco-sponsored inquiry into present obstacles to the production and flow of books in Africa revealed a number of priority needs. Africa's greatest demand is for children's books, books on all the basic and applied sciences and on history and geography. More people are studying languages, some interest is being shown in litera-

Africa has a great tradition of oral literature. Today the rich imagery of its poems and stories is finding a new form of expression in the pages of books. These illustrations are taken from a collection of Yoruba children's poems entitled "The Moon Cannot Fight", published by Mbari Publications, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Drawings © Mbari Publications, Ibadan





ture, but little in the arts, in philosophy and psychology.

Top priority is given to books that contribute to economic development. But this situation is gradually changing as a middle class emerges and is creating a market for non-functional books.

African countries depend largely on imported books. Reports from twenty-five countries revealed that eight had no publishing at all, fourteen imported their primary school books and nineteen all their secondary school books.

On the face of it there is no reason why African countries should not continue to rely on book imports, providing freight charges can be kept to a minimum and an effective distribution system is established. But studies have shown that in planning for the free flow of information and knowledge within and between countries, it is better in the long run for a national book industry, or as much of it as possible, to be indigenous from the start.

A book-publishing industry can contribute to long-term economic and social development and to industrial expansion and it is also a source of satisfaction to national pride. There are also sound educational and psychological reasons for developing national book publishing. Local writers, artists and, above all, editors are more likely than those from another country to be responsive to the ideas, feelings and general outlook in their own communities.

Should publishing in a developing country be state-controlled or run by private entreprise? In some African countries there is now a tendency for school books and books for the general public to be state-controlled. One example is Guinea where the national presses at Conakry print political books under government auspices. Centralized state publishing has certain advantages, notably lower production costs. The best solution for Africa appears to be a combination of national centralized publishing and private publishing.

Commercial publishing has established itself in Africa over the years, although mainly through foreign publishing houses. Some countries have now set up companies to which foreign publishers contribute capital and experience

CONT'D ON NEXT PAGE

Opening 'book roads' to the village

and Africans provide the rest of the capital and the men who will be trained to run the firms.

In countries with populations of three million or less neither local nor foreign commercial publishers can produce primers and readers for mass literacy at prices within the reach of the average reader. The need to produce books in several languages, perhaps with different scripts, creates serious problems for the commercial publisher.

Today most primary school books are produced for a wide area. It is true that publishers try to meet the needs of smaller countries by publishing special editions, but for financial reasons they can only make minor alterations where, in fact, the books should be completely rewritten to suit local conditions and school systems.

For small countries the best solution seems to be centralized local publishing firms, financed wholly or partly by the government, but retaining freedom of action to plan and handle operations to meet local needs.

The publication of books for mass literacy campaigns is handicapped by the multiplicity of local languages in African countries. Nigeria is said to have over 200 local languages and dialects. Countries facing this problem simply publish books in those of their languages which have the widest currency. Sierra Leone, with a population of only two million, has eighteen languages. It publishes primers, readers and other literature in five languages and primers in two others.

In most countries governments and educationists have taken a firm line and have adopted the one or two languages of widest circulation for teaching. This linguistic problem may eventually be solved by adoption of a single national language. Ghana, which has 56 languages and dialects, is now working towards the use of Akan as its national language.

IN some countries it might be better to combine mass literacy publishing units and the school publication centres into a single operation. A distinction has to be made between the publishing and the printing of books; to publish the books it needs for school and literacy teaching a country does not need full book-printing facilities. American publishers sometimes have their printing done in Japan and British publishers have been known to print as far away as Hong Kong.

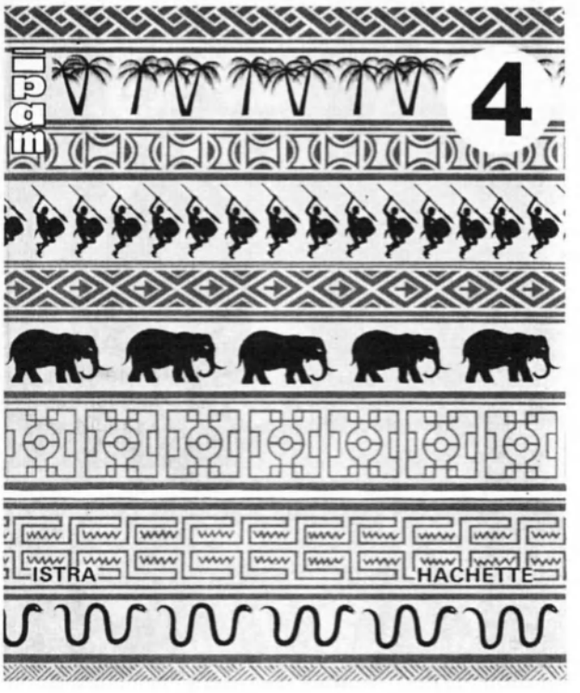
There is, however, an obvious need for greater printing facilities in Africa. While there are probably enough presses to satisfy demands on a regional basis, a country-by-country study reveals some critical situations. Certain countries, Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Southern Rhodesia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, have a comparatively large concentration of presses. But many African countries have only a few each (often a single government-owned plant) and at least five have no presses at all.

Neither large nor small countries appear to favour regional co-operation as a solution to the problem of providing printing facilities. The Unesco Textbook Production Centre at Yaoundé in the Cameroon is a type of organization that it may be difficult to duplicate elsewhere in Africa. This centre provides textbook printing facilities for the five adjacent countries of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville) and Gabon.

The centre is already doing extremely useful work yet in the near future it may become even more important as a training ground for African printers than as a printing centre for textbooks and manuals.

All over the African continent plans to install or expand printing facilities are dependent on the availability of skilled printers, proper machinery, paper and printing materials and electric power.

Broadly speaking, once publishing houses begin to function in African countries, the development of local printers, proper machinery, paper and printing materials and of a regular volume of books to be printed. An example of how this process functions is offered by Jamaica in the West Indies. There the creation of a schools publication branch by the Ministry of Education has greatly stimulated



Many African countries still depend to a large extent on imported school books. These designs are part of the cover of a French language reader for African schools published in France.

the local printing industry. Jamaica, which previously had no modern printing facilities, now has two large plants capable of producing most kinds of primers and readers for primary schools and adult literacy campaigns.

But in developing countries book publishing comes up against a serious obstacle: printing costs. Many publishers complain that prices in local African plants are much higher than in countries on other continents.

In the new African plants printing costs are inevitably high at the start. But publishers have to keep their prices low to stay in business. Some compromise solution must therefore be found.

The developing countries are not only short of printing facilities but also of paper for printing books. African and Asian needs in paper are steadily increasing. In 1960 countries on these continents (exclusive of Japan and mainland China) required one and one eighth million tons of newsprint and printing and writing paper. By 1975 these needs may well have increased five-fold to nearly five million tons.

Even though these five million tons only represent about one-tenth of the expected total world consumption in 1975, it is doubtful whether Africa and Asia will be able to satisfy this demand from their own production resources or even to purchase the paper they need.

Expensive freight charges, poorly developed distribution

systems and high tariffs, which vary from country to country and which average between 20 % and 30 %, all raise the cost of paper in Africa, sometimes to double the international price level. Here, foreign aid would be an invaluable asset. To supply Africa and Asia with paper would be a sure way of helping their countries along the road of educational and cultural progress.

Governments should be urged to reduce or abolish tariffs and taxes on newsprint and paper for educational books. They should also be encouraged to provide foreign currency for the import of paper and printing supplies.

African countries wish to be free from their present dependency on foreign supplies of paper and printing materials. Many are now studying how to set up paper mills and one in particular is watching with special interest experiments in the production of paper from the eucalyptus tree which grows plentifully within its borders.

Yet it is unlikely that on the basis of present plans Africa will be able to produce more than a small proportion of the paper it needs for some time to come. The production of newsprint and other printing paper depends not only on availability of raw materials, but also on the development of supporting structures: electric power, chemicals, transport and so on.

In Africa, as in other developing areas, books must be sold as cheaply as possible. This means that import and export taxes, sales taxes and similar restrictions on books must be reduced to a minimum or abolished. The special claim of books for preferential treatment in competition with other products is justified by the primary role they play in national development, in the preservation of culture and knowledge and in the free flow of ideas.

Although less than one quarter of the African countries have so far signed the Unesco Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials, most adhere to the spirit of this agreement by allowing books to be imported free from customs duties and charges.

In Africa, bookshops are concentrated in large cities, and attempts to establish them in rural areas have often been difficult. Hence less conventional methods are used: retail traders carry books as a line of stock, pavement hawkers offer them to the passer-by and vans, mobile bookshops and small bookshops attached to schools are all mobilized as distribution points.

A geography text book published in Addis Ababa for Ethiopian schools.

A work published by the Institute of Higher Studies at Tananarive, the capital of Madagascar.

THE Unesco inquiry shows that in city areas the most effective means of book distribution is the bookshop, followed by the newsagent and the bookstall. In rural areas the bookshop, even a small one attached to a school, is found to be the most effective method of distribution; next come mobile bookshops and last of all the book pedlars.

What measures will help to promote bookselling in Africa?

1) Prices of books must be kept low by both local and foreign publishers; 2) controls on the importation of books should be removed by governments; 3) shipping charges should be cut, by international agreement if necessary since shipping companies are seldom African-owned; 4) road and rail charges should be reduced for book transport.

Every large town should have its bookshop and every country its chain of bookshops. For this, government help is needed. Such financial support is an investment in education and therefore in the development of a nation's potentialities.

In rural areas valuable work is being done by bookshops attached to local schools and run by teachers and also by small book vans and mobile bookshops. Furthermore, in country districts the bookshop is not there merely to stimulate the reading habit. If many bookshops in Africa's rural centres have so far done only poor business, it is because the booksellers are not properly trained. African governments would be well advised to co-operate with local booksellers in drawing up a comprehensive long term plan for developing book distribution in their countries.

No matter how much is done to promote book sales, some titles will always be beyond the reach of the average pocket. This is especially true of the developing countries. It is up to libraries to provide such books.

A good library service does more; it is itself an incentive to reading, and by stimulating people to buy their own books and to gradually assemble home libraries it helps to create a flourishing book trade. This, of course, raises the problem of training competent librarians.

The same problem exists in book publishing. Africa urgently needs properly trained personnel in this field, and in setting up a training programme, the co-operation of foreign publishing houses would be a major asset.

CLIFFORD. M. FYLE *is a member of the Ministry of Education, Freetown, Sierra Leone. He is the author of "The Flow and Production of Books in Africa", published in "Books for the Developing Countries" (No 47 in Unesco's Reports and Papers on Mass Communication) which is the result of a special inquiry carried out under Unesco's auspices into the development of book production and distribution in Africa and Asia.*

Some Unesco publications on books

Access to Books, 1952 *, $0.20, 1/-

Books for All, by R.E. Barker, 1956 *, $3, 15/-

Books for the Developing Countries. Asia, Africa, by Om Prakash and Clifford M. Fyle, Unesco 1965, $0.50, 3/-

Book Production 1937-1954 and Translations 1950-1954, Unesco 1957, $0.40, 2/-

The Delhi Public Library - An Evaluation Report, by Frank M. Gardner, Unesco, 1957, $1.50, 7/6

Development of Public Libraries in Africa - The Ibadan Seminar, Unesco, 1954, $1.75, 9/6

Development of Public Libraries in Latin America - The São Paulo Conference, Unesco, 1952 *, $1, 6/-

Directory of Reference Works Published in Asia, by P.K. Garde (biling. Eng., Fr.), Unesco, 1956 *, $2, 10/6

A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding, Unesco, 1949 *, $0.45, 2/-

Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications (quadrilingual Eng., Fr., Rus., Sp.), 1964, $7.50, 38/6, bound $8.50, 42/-

History Textbooks and International Understanding, by J. A. Lauwerys, Unesco, 1958, $0.85, 4/-

Index Translationum (vol. XVI) (latest issue), $25.00, 125/-, bound $28.00, 140/-.

Public Libraries and their Mission, by André Maurois, Unesco, 1963 *, free

The Revolution in Books, by Robert Escarpit, in preparation in Eng.

Unesco Copyright Bulletin, published annually from 1964 (triling., Eng., Fr., Sp.), $5.00, 25/-

Unesco Bulletin for Libraries, bimonthly, annual subscription $3.50, 18/-, per copy $0.75, 4/

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* *Out of print. Readers are referred to their local library.*

Unesco Courier articles

JUNE 1948: Unesco Sets Programme for Classics Translation, by H.M. Barnes, Jr.; Copyright Expert Views Conflicting National Laws, by François Hepp; Low-priced Books—A Neglected Medium of Mass Communication.

OCTOBER 1948: Improvement of Textbooks Sought in Member States, by L. James Quillen.

JUNE 1949: The Librarians Join Hands.

AUGUST 1949: The Role of Cheap Books, by J.L. Crammer.

SEPTEMBER 1949: International Circulation of Publications; Unesco's Contribution to Libraries' Reconstruction and Development.

JUNE 1950: Beirut Translation Commission Will Fill Gaps in Islamic-Western Literature.

SEPTEMBER 1950: Libraries, a Neglected Resource.

JANUARY 1951: Libraries and a Better Life.

MARCH 1951: The Care-Unesco Book Fund Programme.

JULY 1952: What People in New Delhi Like to Read, by Frank M. Gardner.

DECEMBER 1952; For Those Who Live by the Pen, by José de Benito.

JUNE 1953 (special issue on books); The Public Library—A Force for Popular Education; Books without Chains, by Francis L. Kent; More Books for Africans; They Pushed Out the Walls, by Karl Detzer; Biblioteca Infantil: A Paradise for Sao Paulo's Children, by S.M. Koffler; In Munich Pinocchio and Babar Are Language Teachers; The Bookmobile Comes to Town, by Gladys Skelley; Le Parisien Likes Travel Books — La Parisienne Prefers Biographies, by Georges Fradier; A Sikh Taxi Driver Discovers the Road to the Library, by Frank M. Gardner.

APRIL-MAY 1954: A Forgotten Spanish Province Wakes Up, by Tena Artigas.

MARCH-APRIL 1955: Munich—International Centre for Children's Books, by Brigitte Gnauck.

FEBRUARY 1956: 5 Readers a Minute. 11 Hours Every Day in Asia's Busiest Library, by Frank M. Gardner.

JANUARY 1957: The Treasures of Iran's Imperial Library.

FEBRUARY 1957 (Special Issue on Books): When Is a Book not a Book?; On a Stroll with Immortal Friends, by Gabrielle Cabrini Agatha Christie Leads Dante and Homer, by Gabrielle Cabrini; World's Most Translated Authors (1948-55); 1955's Most Translated Authors in 15 Countries; Tidbits, Eccentrica and Other Morsels; Saved from Fire and Water; 5,000 Million Books a Year; A Coin in the Slot and out Pops Plato, by Bertha Gaster; Soviet Book News for 1957; Men in Long Black Robes, by Jorge Carrera Andrade; What Has TV Done to Book Reading? by Henry Cassirer; The Publisher's Dilemma; Some Best Sellers in Science.

JUNE 1957: Great Literature of East and West, by M. Arrhe; Complete List of Unesco's Literature Series.

MARCH 1958: Books for the New Reading Public, by J.E. Morpurgo.

APRIL 1958: Translation in the Modern World, by E. Cary; Bridges between East and West, an Analysis of "Index Translationum", by Robert L. Collison.

JANUARY 1960: Books on Wheels — A Library Comes to a Greek Village.

APRIL 1961: Japan Misrepresented, a Look at Foreign Textbooks.

MAY 1961: André Maurois Speaks of Books and of Libraries.

MAY 1962: Modern Japanese Fiction, a Break with Literary Tradition, by Ivan Morris.

JANUARY 1963: The Library of the Future, by J.H. Shera.

FEBRUARY 1963: The Continuing Barrier, Translation and East-West Communications, by Robert Collison.

All these issues are now out of print. We refer readers to their local library.

Letters to the Editor

THE 'SEMANTICS' OF SEMANTICS

Sir,

I read Seymour Fersh's article, "Words Under a Mask" in your February 1965 issue. I work in semantics, and should like to say a few "Words Under a Mask," in your publishing this article in your journal.

The term "semantics" has lately been used in connexion with various trends of thought, and has acquired a multiplicity of meanings which sometimes inevitably results in grave misunderstandings or is deliberately made to serve certain ends. The term was initially used by linguists—first by the German philologist Christian Karl Reisig (1839), and later by the French linguist, Michel Breal (1897)—and is at present widely current in this sphere to designate the branch dealing with the signification of words.

It subsequently served to denote one of the three branches of semiotics, the theory of signs and symbols developed by Charles Pearce, Charles Morris, and others. In semiotics, semantics is assigned the study of the connotations of signs. Semiotics is akin to that trend in modern neopositivism, which in Soviet scientific writing is designated by the name of semantic philosophy (Logical semantics), and which analyzes the truth and falsity of linguistic denotations.

GENERAL semantics was established in 1933 with the publication of Alfred Korzibsky's book, "Science and Health." It has nothing to do with the semantics described above although it does make an effort to use their arguments, and tackles some of their problems (in a highly modified context) and in general tries in every way to use "academic semantics" as a basis. On the other hand, the latter in all its trends recoils from general semantics, relations with which it clearly finds embarrassing.

One of the leading lights of semantic neopositivism, Alfred Tarski, dissociating himself from the tasks and purposes of general semantics, writes: "... semantics... is a sober and modest discipline which has no pretensions of being a universal patent-medicine for all the ills and diseases of mankind, whether imaginary or real. You will not find in semantics any remedy for decayed teeth or illusions of grandeur or class conflicts" (1). The well-known American linguist, Eugene Nida, says that Korzibsky was not justified in using the terms "semantics" and adds that the latter's pretensions have turned semantics into a species of ethics... or almost a religion (2).

These statements give an idea of what general semantics actually is. Its promises are many: it aims to debunk Aristotelian (formal) logic, create a new theory of cognition, establish peace and social harmony on earth, release man from the tyranny of language, introduce a hygiene of thinking, etc. It is therefore extremely difficult to define its tasks and purposes. What is more, they are variously formulated by Korzibsky's followers: S. J. Hayakawa, Irving Lee, Stuart Chase, Anatol Rapoport, and others.

STUART Chase appears to have given the most widely accepted definition of its purposes. They are, one, to help make a more precise evaluation of the environment, that is, teach more precise thinking; two, improve communication both on the part of the speaker and the auditor, and, on that basis, three, to develop mental hygiene.

In spite of its international congresses general semantics is a patently localized movement: it has not spread beyond the borders of the United States, although it has done everything to do so. The magazine *Etc.* (which is one of the principles of general semantics) is the propaganda and theoretical organ of the movement, which recruits its members from among economists, lawyers, journalists, travelling salesmen, etc., who try to practise the principles of general semantics in their business. General semantics is sometimes defined as a distinct philosophical trend, but there is no ground for this. It is true that the works of its most serious representative, Anatol Rapoport, reveal an effort to confine general semantics to a scientific framework and to examine a number of gnoseological problems. But, as I have said, all its elements of scientific theory have been borrowed from other spheres (through the multiplicity of significations of the term "semantics"), and should be examined as such. General semantics assesses these problems from the standpoint of their pragmatic signification. Consequently, general semantics is not a philosophical trend but a definite ideological movement.

The chief point of reference for all the dissertations of general semantics is human language and its ambiguities which are revealed in the process of communication. It takes human experience and language to be two distinct magnitudes and ascribes all the flaws of communication, which lead to incorrect conclusions and social misunderstandings, to the inability of language to give adequate expression to human experience, and even to the inherent property of language to distort reality and impose on speakers the built-in values of language.

Actually, however, language sums up human experience.

It is always at the back of language and people can understand each other through speech for no other reason than that both the speaker and the auditor refer words to experience. As for the abstract nature of language, which is allegedly incapable of conveying the concrete essence of each particular case, it is only one of its aspects, for when necessary language can be concrete to the maximum. Of course, when we take, say, the word "man" separately it has an abstract meaning but then we rarely use words without reference to others. And when we link up words with each other and say: "The man before us", the meaning of the word becomes adequately concrete to convey the uniqueness of the situation.

ONE proposition of general semantics that can be accepted is that language should be used with the greatest possible care and precision. But it is no easy task to erect an original philosophic system on this pretty tattered truth. General semantics does teach another useful lesson: we have clearly not made an adequate study of human language, its properties and specific features. Otherwise, there would have been no room for the kind of reasoning we find in general semantics.

I'm afraid Mr. Fersh's article will confuse readers by giving them an incorrect idea of the authenticity of our knowledge, the cognoscibility of the real world, the causes of social phenomena, and the science of semantics in general. I think its publication in such a journal as The Unesco Courier is unjustified.

Profesor Vladimir Zvegintsev,
Moscow State University, U.S.S.R.

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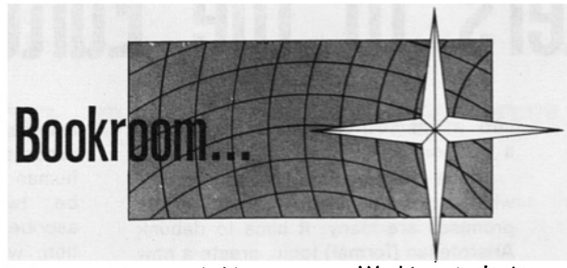
1. A. Tarski. The Semantic Conception of Truth. Semantics and the Philosophy of Language. Ed. by L. Linsky, 1952.

2. E. Nida, A System for the Description of Semantic Elements, "Word", Vol. 7, 1951, N° 1.

Ed. note: Mr. Fersh comments: "My major purpose in writing the article was hopefully to stimulate an increased awareness to the ways in which language misinforms as well as informs. It was not my intention to examine the 'semantics' of semantics nor to appear in any way a special proponent of a particular school of linguistic analysis."

From the Unesco Bookroom...



FOR THE PARTIALLY-SIGHTED: Novels printed in very large type for partially-sighted people who cannot read normal newspaper or book print even with the help of glasses are being produced in the United Kingdom. They weigh only about a quarter of a pound heavier than the average novel. The idea was launched by a retired publisher. The first 24 titles in the Ulverscroft series, as they are called, will appear at the rate of four a month. They will be available only through libraries, welfare organizations and agencies for the blind. For further information write to The Library Association, Chaucer House, Malet Place, London, W.C.1.

FOUR CENTURIES OF PUBLISHING: Last year the U.S.S.R., celebrated the 400th anniversary of Russian book printing and honoured its founder, Ivan Federov. The immense printing and publishing industry in the U.S.S.R. now turns out more than 2,000 books every minute (about three million a day). Betwen 1918 and 1963, 27,500 million copies of books and pamphlets (some two million titles) were published in the Soviet Union.

ELECTRONIC BRAILLE: An electronic computer is now being used to translate English into Braille at the American Printing House for the Blind at Louisville, Ky. (U.S.A.) The computer converts English into the 246 characters of Grade II Braille: combinations of six raised dots representing the alphabet, punctuation and numbers as well as 183 special contractions and abbreviations. Working at electronic speeds, the computer can translate an average of more than 1,000 words a minute. Texts are first reproduced on punched cards which are fed into the computer. This produces a printed page with Braille characters matched to the English equivalent. After this has been proof-read, the computer makes a new set of punched cards which are used to operate a sterograph (a machine producing the embossed plates from which Braille pages are prepared). The new process has speeded up the publication of Braille books.

UNESCO BEST-SELLER: One of Unesco's best-sellers is a "do-it-yourself" science book, "Source Book for Science Teaching". First published by Unesco in 1956, it has now been translated and published in 27 languages, in editions totalling 400,000 copies. It explains how to make laboratory equipment and carry out simple experiments and observations in physics, astronomy, hydrology, electricity, heat magnetism and many more scientific fields. All this can be done with "home-made" equipment of the simplest kind, such as tins, bottles, needles and clothes pegs. Unesco's "Source Book for Science Teaching" has especially helped schools which have little or no science teaching equipment.

AID FOR THE PARALYZED: Cripples who are unable to read or write because they cannot hold a pencil or turn the pages of a book are being helped in the United Kingdom through special equipment devised by the Writing and Reading Aids for the Paralyzed Committee, Polio Research Fund, London. The committee has developed a bedside microfilm projector that reproduces the image of a microfilmed book on a small screen. The sick person can turn the pages either by touching a switch, or with pressure from the lips. A microfilm of any book requested can usually be supplied within a few days.

BOOM IN BOOK CLUBS: Twenty per cent of bookselling in the Federal Republic of Germany was done through book clubs in 1962, according to a recent inquiry. Originally launched in Germany in 1918, book clubs now operate in a variety of forms all over the world. In 1962, 5.5% of the population of France belonged to book clubs. Book clubs have developed most of all in the United States.

WHO READS MOST? Frenchmen spend more time reading than Frenchwomen, according to a study by French publishers. A sample analysis of adult reading habits in France showed that 45% of men and 37.5% of women read books. Most people (73%) do their reading in the evening.

BOOKS ARE BIG BUSINESS: The American reading public now buys nearly $2,000 million worth of books every year according to "The American Reading Public: What it reads; why it reads" (edited by Roger J. Smith and published by R.R. Bowker Co., New York; $7.95). The American public buys approximately 270 million copies of magazines every issue and more than 60 million newspapers every day (48 million on Sundays).

NEW ROLES FOR LIBRARIANS: The spread of libraries across the U.S.S.R. has put a librarian in every village and added an important social and pedagogical role to his work. In the United States, where public libraries serve 70% of the population, the library is increasingly the cultural centre of the community and a major aid to adult education.

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS: Under its Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values, Unesco has arranged during the past eight years for the publication of 60 titles in English and 42 in French, translated from the literature of Eastern countries. As many as 100 additional titles are now in preparation. Among works of major significance published recently are translations in English and French of the famous collection of Indian stories, "The Panchatantra" (Allen and Unwin, London, 28/-) and the important anthology of ancient Japanese poetry, "The Manyoshu" (Columbia University Press, London and New York, $12.50).

THRILLERS NOT POPULAR: In 1963-64, India published 11,256 titles in English; 3,500 in Hindi; 1,763 in Marathi; and 1,666 in Bengali according to a report compiled by the National Library, Calcutta. A recent reading-habits survey in India showed that 61.2% of readers polled preferred fiction and 62% were interested in social novels. Detective stories were only preferred by 21%—the lowest in the scale of preferences.

UNESCO'S LATEST GUIDE TO WORLD TRANSLATIONS

MORE books were translated in 1963 than in any previous year according to the latest volume of "Index Translationum", (1) Unesco's international bibliography of translations, which records a total of 34,143 titles translated in 69 countries. The previous edition, covering 1962, listed 32,787 works translated in 70 countries.

Compiled with the help of librarians in many countries, "Index Translationum" presents a detailed picture of world translations, recording those published in a single year; listings include new editions of previously published books. It has recorded over 376,000 titles of translated works in the past sixteen years and this figure will have passed the 400,000 mark by the time the 17th volume is published.

In number of works translated in 1963 Shakespeare leads with 207, reports the recently published 820-page 16th edition. Printings of the Bible and extracts from it total 181. Translations of writings by Lenin total 148, and the names of Marx and Engels are listed 88 and 61 times respectively.

Nobel Prize winners for literature are well represented: John Steinbeck, 93 translations; Ernest Hemingway, 50; Jean-Paul Sartre, 45 (1963 was his pre-prize year); William Faulkner, 37; Ivo Andric, 33; Albert Camus, 32.

Tolstoy, perennially the most translated novelist, has 94 translations. There are 84 listings for Jules Verne, 75 for Dostoievski, 65 for Balzac, 65 for Pearl Buck, 57 for Graham Greene, 54 for Stendhal and 42 for Somerset Maugham.

Among the established favourites in other fields whose ratings remain high are dramatists George Bernard Shaw, Anton Chekov and Berthold Brecht, the children's tales by Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen and the mystery stories of Agatha Christie, Erle S. Gardner and Georges Simenon.

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(1) 16th edition. Unesco, Place de Fontenoy, Paris 7e. Price: $25; £6.5.0. (stg.); 87F.

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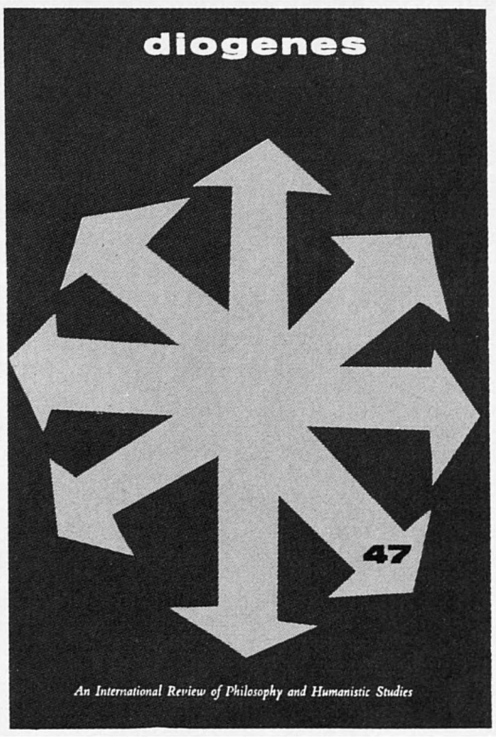

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